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THE GOSPEL IN THE LIGHT OF  
THE GREAT WAR

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# THE GOSPEL IN THE LIGHT OF THE GREAT WAR

*By*  
OZORA S. DAVIS



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## PREFACE

This book is not a treatise on formal homiletics. It is designed as a workable manual for the preacher who is facing the opportunities of the pulpit in an age which the writer believes is the most challenging and fascinating in the history of the Christian church. The Great War not only raised tremendous questions with which the preacher must deal, but it called a literature into being which is throbbing with life and power. The letters and meditations of the soldiers are priceless, and many of them will become permanent possessions of a new world which will discover that these young writers have spoken in free and varied forms the deepest message of this urgent generation.

The great experience through which we have passed has also added a new sense of reality and worth to our appreciation of the Bible. It, too, was born from fierce and long struggle; it is amazing how much of the temper of the war and of the constructive purpose following it is reflected in the Scriptures.

To define the great subjects that have been thrust forward during the last five years, to show how the vital documents of the new literature bear upon them, and chiefly to bring the Bible into use as a source of text and subject and illustration is the purpose of this volume.

The writer has ventured to offer practical suggestions concerning the use of texts and illustrative material. This is designed to be only in the way of suggestion.



The horror of "canned outlines" of sermons or garlands of poetic gems for illustration is unspeakable. The suggestions offered are simply examples of a profitable way to work the rich mine of biblical and recent literature. No plagiarism would be involved in using them; but they are presented to stimulate study rather than to stifle it.

The writer is a preacher. He knows the hardship and the splendor of the task. These pages have been written in a temper of grateful regard for the high quality of the American ministry and a resolute devotion to the work of preaching. He now sends the book forth to his comrades with the earnest hope that it may help somewhat in making the old message of the gospel vibrant with new meaning and power to a confused and yearning age.

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## CHAPTER I

### NEW CONDITIONS DEFINING THE PREACHER'S TASK

Every Christian preacher is facing the most exigent and commanding situation of human history in these days when the world is simply being re-made through the results of the Great War. Never was there such need of the clear mind and the flaming soul in the pulpits of America. Today the preacher may come to his throne, but he never will arrive there by accident or without preparation adequate to the service that he must render.

But in what spirit is he to preach? What is his distinctive message? How is he to prepare for and discharge his task? These questions surge to the center of our thought. New problems, vaster in their range and deeper in their drive than have ever before demanded solution, are upon us. The minister must be prepared to create and guide public opinion. How profound these changes are is indicated by the following observation from a man who has traveled widely and observed carefully:

Is a new theology, determined by democracy, to emerge from this war? May we look to the consensus of popular opinion, instead of to the theologians, for our great ideas about God and the soul and the future life?

There are clear signs pointing that way. For . . . a really startling radicalism pervades the thinking of the armies, and of the chaplains and of Young Men's Christian Association workers who have been long with the troops. Conventions have lost their

grip. Nobody cares a cootie for "orthodoxy," as such. Old usages and old creeds seem to have succumbed to the U-boats, or some other force, on the way over. All things, from the very existence of a Supreme Being to the right of a church to exist, have had to face the challenge of this new, emancipated, free-thinking, audacious war mind. Whether this is as it should be or not, I am not here discussing: this article is not a statement of the writer's opinions, but of clearly revealed conditions. Churches and seminaries and religious institutions at home do not realize it, but they, too, are in the melting pot that is bubbling in France.<sup>1</sup>

Another statement of the changing present and the future task of humanity in building a new world comes from one of the most valuable books produced by the war, whose author says:

With brains and hearts clean now of all terror, grief-purged men and women everywhere are rising from this devastation with a wondering respect for the resilience of the human soul, and with a great instinct toward rebuilding driving them on into the new future. Evolution teaches that survival depends on the power of adaptation to environment; is not the effort of each nation to reconstruct this destruction constant evidence of the vast impulse of the human race to discover an adjustment of life to death that shall make for endurance rather than decay?<sup>2</sup>

Still a third statement deserves consideration here. Speaking at the centennial of Auburn Theological Seminary, October 10, 1918, Secretary of State Robert Lansing said:

The principles upon which a general peace will be made between the warring nations have been clearly stated by President Wilson. These principles of justice must guide those charged with the negotiation of the great treaty of peace, and must find

<sup>1</sup> William T. Ellis, *The New Theology of the Trenches*.

<sup>2</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death* (1918), p. 53. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.



expression in that momentous document which will lay the foundation for a world transformed.

Thoughtful men must know that the peace which is to come will not be a lasting peace if its terms are written in anger or if revenge rather than the desire for strict justice and the common good is the underlying motive of those who are charged with the grave responsibility of drafting the greatest treaty which this world has ever known.

The new era born in blood and fire on the battlefields of Europe must be a Christian era in reality and not alone in name. The years to come must be years of fraternity and common purpose. International injustice must cease. All men must be free from the oppression of arbitrary power. Unreasoning class hatreds and class tyrannies must come to an end. Society must be organized on principles of justice and liberty. The world must be ruled by the dominant will to do what is right.

No preacher can read this noble statement of the American Secretary of State without a kindling heart. Here is the ringing voice of the old prophets; here is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God as Jesus taught it; here is subject-matter for preaching that ought to thrill every Christian congregation through the length of the land.

The whole order of human life has been shaken to its foundations and, after peace is established, there will remain a problem and duty greater than humanity ever has faced before even in its most critical and difficult periods of history. The world must be re-made in order that the issues of the war may be turned into beneficent forms.

Our present uncertainty is not concerning the fact of this task, but rather as to what the particular problems will be and how they are to be attacked and solved. No one is able to forecast the lines along which the world

is to be "remolded nearer to the heart's desire." As a recent writer says:

Conjectures multiply as to the character of the new era, but that there will be a new era is beyond conjecture—a new set of living conditions, a new scale of values, a new alignment of social elements, a new arrangement of human relationships, a new basis of international life.<sup>1</sup>

Dr. Fosdick states the same conviction as follows:

We are challenged by this war to a renovation of our popular Christianity, to a deep and unrelenting detestation of the little bigotries, the needless divisions, the petty obscurantisms that so deeply curse our churches, to a new experience and more intelligent expression of vital fellowship with God. Unless we can answer that challenge, there is small use in our trying to answer any other. We must have a great religion to meet a great need.<sup>2</sup>

Scarcely had the tumult and the shouting that followed the signing of the armistice died away before many voices were heard, not only defining the new tasks before the world, but warning the American people against remitting their devoted championship of the ideals of democracy. Among these the following editorial from the *Chicago Evening Post* of November 13, 1918, is an example:

#### BUILDING A NEW WORLD

For four years our minds have been filled with tales of suffering and destruction. In imagination, gazing at Europe, we have seen a picture of violence, flame, blood, and ruin. The world has been distraught, agonized, and superheated in emotion.

And now we must try to look at the world from a new standpoint. We must try to think of it in other terms.

<sup>1</sup> Murray, *The Call of a World Task*, p. 1.

<sup>2</sup> Fosdick, *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 82. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

If the victory we have won means anything, it means that the world has been cleansed and cleared of much that poisoned and encumbered in order that it may be built anew after a better fashion.

Imagination is wearied with trying to grasp the horror of the conflict through which we have passed and from which we are emerging. Thus tired, it may be slow to grasp the possibilities of the new era that dawns. And yet the great need is for constructive imagination now.

Everywhere it is important that men and women turn their thoughts to the work of rebuilding and bring to the tasks that await them the lessons that have been learned in bitterness of soul.

War has brought us together. It brought all classes together in the lands that fought for freedom. It broke down barriers of caste and economic difference. It gave us a common experience in suffering and a common impulse for service.

War taught us to give and to submit to taxation cheerfully for the common cause. It bred in us a spirit of sacrifice, a willingness to subordinate the individual right to the general good.

War made us generous spenders on public enterprise—for the defense of the nation and the achievement of its ideals were a public enterprise. We did not stint. Whatever was needed that was done, without considering cost.

War promoted co-operation among nations that had been keen rivals and distrustful rivals. It taught us the worth and the fineness of people who spoke other tongues than ours and lived in other climes. We realized that brotherhood was more than a word on the lips of the orator—it was a practical, a very practical, possibility.

We made of war a great emergency that discounted everything else, and because of that we gained the victory.

Are the problems that victory and peace will bring us any less emergent and less vital to the freedom and happiness of mankind than those that our armies solved on the fields of battle and our civilians solved in the trenches of commerce, industry, and public effort?

Surely they are not.

The fact is that unless we meet these problems with the same spirit of serious determination that has marked democracy in its struggle with the enemy we cannot win from the war the full measure of what victory should mean. Unless we are prepared to carry into the days ahead the same consciousness of a common service that obliterates lines of class and creed and race; the same readiness to give and to sacrifice; the same willingness to spend largely and wisely for the general good, we are going to make the graves in France and Flanders unavailing, we are going to miss the goal of human betterment for which the paths have been opened at the cost of blood.

Building a new world must grip imagination and enlist effort as splendidly as did the pulling down of autocracy and the wiping out of oppression. The world will not build itself, nor will it be built well if we backslide into the old selfishness, the old blind individualism, the old narrow nationalism that obtained in all countries to a largely controlling degree four years ago.

The man who breathes easily and says, "Now we can return to our former ways. Things can go on as before," is a traitor to his time and to the men who gave their lives in order that things might be changed. Things must not go on as before. Democracy has wrested the world from the clutches of the last of the autocrats, and democracy must now prove that it can make a better world than that of which "kultur" dreamed. That is our task. It is big enough and fine enough to inspire the best that is in America and in her great comrades of the allies overseas.

What is to furnish the energy for this constructive work? What is the general line of development which it is to follow? It has been said that we can no longer look confidently to Christianity for help because it did not prove itself strong enough to prevent the Great War. That, however, is not a fair verdict. The Great War came because there was not enough of the real religion of Jesus in the world; Christianity never had been tried. The Christian religion has not been discredited by the Great War; it has not collapsed. Christianity will be

the primary source of creative energy in the new world. The ideal of the Kingdom of God is still the goal ahead of the race. There is power enough in the Christian ideal to make the world over.

It has been said that the ministers did not prove themselves able to be the moral and spiritual leaders of the community in the period of the Great War; when community action was demanded to safeguard the highest interests of the nation, the business men and the newspaper men were the leaders to whom the people turned. A study of the records will set this criticism at rest. Of course the ministers and churches were not the exclusive leaders of public opinion or civic action in the time of the Great War. The share that they took in the final action of the nation was not so significant as it was, for example, in the early history of the New England colonies, when the principles taught by John Cotton and the measures advised in his pulpit on Sunday were said to have been promptly enacted into law by the General Court during the following week. On the other hand, no other institution and no other body of men has contributed a larger measure of influence to the inspiration and guidance of public opinion during the Great War than the ministers and the churches. The uses to which the churches have been put, the sermons preached which shaped public opinion concerning the moral and spiritual aims of the war, the services rendered to the nation by the ministers themselves—all these are the proof of the proposition that the Christian religion as represented in the churches of America has been the most powerful single factor in the guidance of the nation during its great struggle.



Now we may confidently look to the same sources for inspiration and guidance during the era of rebuilding that is upon us. Ministers and church leaders must see the duty before them and address themselves to the task of continuing to hold up the standards of truth and justice toward which the nation must work its way. Earnest thought must be given to this work. As Robert E. Speer has said:

What we are living through now is the fruitage of the long past and we are sowing today for our children's reaping tomorrow. In this view, if men do not prepare in advance for the solution of their problems it is too late to prepare when the time for the solution arrives. The forces of good which are to cope with the forces of evil must be developed contemporaneously with them. This is the comfort of our faith in God.<sup>1</sup>

The gospel has an essential function to perform in the making of the new world. The message and mission of Jesus are by no means exhausted in their reference to the individual. Christianity is meant for industry and society and politics. It will be impossible to apply it to these vast and bewildering problems unless we ourselves have the large and noble conception of it which is fundamentally necessary. The vision of a Christianity large enough to perform its function in the great world must be vivid in the preacher's mind; then he will begin to bring his message to an age re-made by war.

The definition of that greater religion which we must have in order to meet the greater needs of the world that is to emerge from the welter of war is found in Christ. The preacher must ask, What did the religion of Jesus mean to him personally? When we answer

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Man, the Church and the War*, p. 66. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

that question we discover what it may mean to us and to our generation. The point has been summed up well by Fosdick:

The Fatherhood of God, the brotherhood of man, the friendship of the Spirit, the inexorableness of the moral law, the supremacy of the Cross, the campaign for the Kingdom, the life eternal—what weight and range must the words have that try to tell what his faith meant to him!<sup>1</sup>

We return therefore to the task of preaching as an essential and paramount factor in the work of re-making the world. Christianity has been extended and maintained in the past by preaching; it will continue to depend upon the same power. It is by the oral delivery of a message, day after day and year after year, in countless tongues and varied forms that the truths and the spirit of Christianity have been spread over the world. There are other ways, to be sure, in which the religion of Christ has been extended; but preaching is the chief, the enduring, method. And the changes wrought by the war are apparently not to make preaching less necessary and vital but rather more.

Criticism of preaching is nothing new. Preaching has been called foolishness; and sometimes it has been foolish. But in spite of this, it is through the power of this ancient business that the Christian gospel has been made known. And the task of preaching has outlived all the wise words of those who have disparaged it; indeed, it has often been called into action to preach the funeral sermon of the critic himself. Thus it seems even now to be entering into a new era of privilege and power instead of passing as a waning interest.

<sup>1</sup> *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 84. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

The act of preaching is a complex and difficult matter under the easiest conditions. Many forces enter into it; the factors composing it are often difficult to untangle. There is the truth to be proclaimed. If this were simply to be elaborated out of a perfectly clear and infallible statement, preaching would not be a very perplexing task, as it surely would not be a rewarding or stimulating one. But the truth that the preacher is to proclaim, in all the depth and range of it, can be discovered only at the cost of intense search and patient thinking. Then there is the personality of the preacher, the medium through which the truth is transmitted in oral form. This is as varied, even under the most favorable circumstances, as personality itself is varied. Real preparation for preaching is nothing less than the preparation of the whole man. The final means by which the truth gets itself expressed is the refined and kindled soul of the man in the pulpit. Then there is the congregation, that limiting audience, whose every mood conditions the extent to which the truth, granted that it has been accurately transmitted through the personality of the preacher, influences the life of those who hear the message. Jesus expressed this principle in the familiar parable of the Sower, or, as it would be better called, the parable of the Soils, to enforce the command, "Take heed how ye hear." For the truth must do business with the persons who hear the sermon; but what it can do will be determined by the receptive audience.

Thus we must reckon with the real world in which the preacher and the congregation live. It is full of hard work and moral perplexity and spiritual struggle. The sermon is not meant for the ideal conditions of a

dream-world, but for this earnest and terrible present year on our planet. It engages with the practical problems of living men, not with hypothetical angels in some glad somewhere. This conditions not only the method and message of the preacher but also the mood and response of the hearer. It is out of the practical surroundings of the listening congregation that the most forceful influences emerge to determine the issues of the sermon. That Sunday sermon, upon which the preacher may have toiled until he sweat blood, will miss its mark if it does not throb with the pulse of reality and appreciation of the actual world for which it is intended.

Therefore it is obvious that all effective preaching must reckon carefully with the age in which the preacher gives his message to his congregation. This is not the supreme item, but it is one of the most significant factors determining the power and permanence of the preacher's work. Spiritual discernment and deep conviction are more significant; but in order that preaching may be sure-footed it must rest on clear insight into the meaning of the age. Otherwise it will fumble at the moment when the world is expectant with interest and when the issues of the greatest experience of humanity since history began to be written depend upon the clear vision and the accurate word of the Christian preachers.

That the character of preaching must be changed in some way ought not to cause dismay to any thoughtful minister. Of course, if preaching is merely the exposition of a system of infallible doctrine, it is less easy to accept the situation than it is if preaching is regarded as the setting forth of truth that is ever running over its old boundaries and bursting its ancient bottles.

That preaching would be changed as a result of the Great War the young French student, Alfred Eugene Casalis, affirmed in these passionate words:

First, there will be our preaching to change. All that consists in empty formulas, beautiful as they may be, powerfully as they may have contributed to nourish souls; all the formulas which are today empty because our philosophic or religious thought, our experiences or our conception of life have outgrown them or caused them to burst their frames—all such formulas must disappear. And what we shall substitute for them as our statement of faith will not be less great, not less beautiful, not less true, if we search for it in the depths of souls in union with God. And it will not be less Christian, for the Spirit of Christ is a spirit which lives, which develops—never remaining for a moment in any fixed form.<sup>1</sup>

The significant words in this statement are "souls in union with God." That, after all, was the purpose which called all the formulas into being; and we need have no fear of final loss if the creative energies behind the formulas are saved. The creeds have served their purpose well in the history of the spirit; they will always be needed. But it is the vital force that creates the creed; it is the experience that renews the formal expression of faith; and out of the Great War is surely coming the old experience of souls in union with God, which is the eternal fact in religion.

Therefore we need not fear changes either in the substance or in the form of preaching so long as its essential message is preserved. And all who understand the meaning of the War as it has been interpreted to us by the religious leaders out of the midst of it are ready to meet the changes without dread and with a clear idea of what must be done in the process of readjustment.

<sup>1</sup> *For France and the Faith*, p. 79. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.



The fear has been expressed that preaching in such an age will lack opportunity. The very fact that the minds of men are so engrossed with the tasks of physical building has been supposed to make well-nigh impossible the declaration of great spiritual truths.

But quite the contrary is the fact. It is in the midst of a generation solemnized by the tremendous experiences of such a conflict that the profoundest truths have the field which they require for expression. In an age that is smitten with poignant grief and stirred to expressions of terrible wrath preaching finds its supreme opportunity.

This has been put concisely by A. Conan Doyle in the following words: "It is, however, when the human soul is ploughed and harrowed by suffering that the seeds of truth may be planted, and so some future spiritual harvest will surely rise from the days in which we live."<sup>1</sup>

Thus instead of limiting the true function of the preacher the Great War simply opened the doors of opportunity to him, affording such privilege as he never has had before to bring the Christian message home to the hearts of men.

The question is often asked, Will there be such changes in the form and subjects of preaching as a result of the war that we can no longer expect results from the methods that have been successful before? The changes which we anticipate in this respect are not radical. The Christian message always has been spoken home to the heart of humanity with the tender and persuasive accents of love and testimony. This will not be changed in times of peace; as it was not changed during the War.

<sup>1</sup> "The New Revelation," *Metropolitan Magazine*, January, 1918.

Donald Hankey, writing concerning his own methods of presenting the message of Christ, said:

When I was talking to them [the soldiers] at these services I always used to try and make them feel that Christ was the fulfilment of all the best things that they admired, that he was their natural hero. I would tell them some stories of heroism and meanness contrasted, of courage and cowardice, of noble forgiveness and vile cruelty, and so get them on the side of the angels. Then I would try and spring it upon them that Christ was the Lord of the heroes and the brave men and the noble men, and that he was fighting against all that was mean and cruel and cowardly, and that it was up to them to take their stand by his side if they wanted to make the world a little better instead of a little worse, and I would try to show them how in little practical ways in their homes and at their work and in the club they could do their bit for Christ.<sup>1</sup>

All this sounds strangely unlike the formal rules for preaching which have been systematized in the science of homiletics. But the permanent principles of preaching are all here. There is the old consciousness of the message to be given, the adapting of the message to the mind of the hearer and the world in which it is to be wrought out into rules for life, and the appeal for such decisions as will make the truth vital.

As we sum up the influence of the new conditions upon the work of the preacher we are assured that the task of re-making the world is going to bring the pulpit its supreme opportunity instead of robbing the preacher of his privilege and power. Certainly the great assurances and comforts of religion never were more necessary than they are now. There never was greater need of inspiration and hope, which are peculiarly the gift of the

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 2, p. 156. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

preacher to the community. Ethical direction never was more necessary to sound community life; and this comes especially from the pulpit. The war has given new warrant to the fact of personal leadership; and the true preacher is trained in the spirit of service. And thus we are justified in looking into the future with the greatest confidence, expecting that the man with the prophetic message and the loving heart will be able to preach as he never has been able to do since the first glowing tongues kindled the lips of the Christian heralds at Pentecost.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON POST-BELLUM TASKS

### SUGGESTION I

"And those twelve stones, which they took out of the Jordan, did Joshua set up in Gilgal" (Josh. 4:20).

#### OLD HARSHIPS AND NEW JOYS

- I. The stones in the bed of Jordan. They represent old difficulties overcome by divine assistance. Human suffering made victorious by the grace of God.
- II. The stones in the altar at Gilgal. They represent new privileges attained by God's help. And they are the very same stones. The lessons learned in the war are to become the essential factors in the new laws by which we re-make the world according to God's will.

### SUGGESTION 2

"From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto Jehovah; but the foundation of the temple of Jehovah was not yet laid" (Ezra 3:6.)

#### CONSECRATING THE INCOMPLETE

- I. The foundations were not yet laid. But the dream of a temple was in the minds of the people. They did not know how it would look; but they were determined that it should

rise. So there is a new world-order in the minds of the best men everywhere. Just what it will be or how it will work out they do not know. But they are determined that it shall be realized.

- II. But the place was consecrated to God. The temporary altar was set up and the spot was hallowed by worship. Christian leaders must pre-empt and consecrate the unrealized institutions of the new world. God must be first; he belongs there.

### SUGGESTION 3

"And the glowing sand shall become a pool, and the thirsty ground springs of water: in the habitation of jackals, where they lay, shall be grass, with reeds and rushes" (Isa. 35:7).

### TRANSFORMED

- I. The abomination of desolation. Study the significance of the three figures to indicate the havoc wrought by the war: glowing sand; thirsty ground; lair of jackals.
- II. The beauty of restoration. Now study the contrasted figures to show the beauty of the new world in the making: a pool; springs of water; grass with reeds and rushes.
- Our task is to accomplish this change.

### SUGGESTION 4

"Doth he that ploweth to sow plow continually? doth he continually open and harrow his ground? when he hath levelled the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and put in the wheat in rows, and the spelt in the border thereof?" (Isa. 28:24, 25).

### GOD TAKES TIME

We shall be impatient to see the new world made in a day. Like child-gardeners, we shall want to dig up our seeds daily to see if they are sprouting and growing. We must learn the secret of the divine patience. Theodore Parker said, "The trouble seems to be that I am in a hurry and God is not." Wise Christian leaders will know that "he that believeth shall not make haste."

## CHAPTER II

### THE INFLUENCE OF THE MODERN PULPIT

When the war began, criticism of preaching had been for a long time current. It was commonly said that the pulpit had lost its power and that preaching was played out. It may as well be admitted frankly that there was some fair warrant for this judgment.

In the first place, the increase in the complex duties of the minister has tended steadily to crowd preaching out of its place of primary importance. The demand for efficient administration and for all sorts of social service has made it well-nigh impossible for a minister to find the time for study and sermon preparation that the relatively simple demands of a former generation permitted. Men have therefore allowed their time and strength to be consumed in the doing of all sorts of administrative work to the neglect of their preaching.

Again, it is fair to state that there has been a decided loss of the sense of message from modern preaching. The argument and the essay and the descriptive presentation of social situations have intruded upon the message which was originally given with the fire of deep conviction straight from the preacher's flaming soul. Our preachers have not been great and positive in heralding the truth to the very heart of the generation. The old flame of the prophets and the missioners has burned low. The torch of the teacher and educator has taken its place with imperfect success.

This is not to disparage the work of religious education and the task of the teacher-preacher. But it is to assert that nothing ever has taken the place of the ardent message which is good news still. There has been much sorrow expressed because the church has seemed to lose its worshipers. But there is something far worse than to lose the crowd; it is loss beyond remedy when the church loses its message. "Message" is a word often misused; but it is one of the great words nevertheless. The preacher is the messenger and his sermon is a message. Nothing less than this will answer for preaching in this generation.

But the criticism against the preachers has been too severe. Neither the churches nor their leaders have failed to the extent that is claimed by the critics. We see this in the way in which the hearts of the people turn again to the institutions and the message of the Christian religion when the days are dark. So we face the future full of courage. The preacher will yet come into his own, and preaching is not played out; it is just entering upon a new expression of power.

The way in which the churches and ministers have behaved has earned for them a better judgment and a kinder consideration. The prevalent criticism is put by Donald Hankey as follows:

The clergy are out of touch with the laity. They do not as a rule understand the real difficulties and temptations of the ordinary man. The sin against which they preach is sin as defined in the theological college, a sort of pale, lifeless shadow of the real thing. The virtue which they extol is equally a ghost of the real, generous, vital love of good which is the only thing that is of any use in the everyday working life of the actual man.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series I, p. 198. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.



But the ministers have entered the service of the country and have taken up the work of safeguarding the moral life of the soldiers in such sacrificial ways as prove that their ideals at least are right, even if they have not understood as fully as they might the conditions under which the average man lives and works. And in the camps and trenches the chaplains have shown that they are made of the right stuff. They have shared the hardships and dangers of the men; they have been with them in the supreme moments of life; they have vindicated the old ideals of the ministry which were supposed to have been lost or to have fallen on evil days.

On the table at which these sentences are being written lies the picture of a young chaplain with the account of his death in action with his regiment in France. Rev. Harry Deiman was pastor of the First Congregational Church in Minneapolis, thoroughly trained for his work, alert in mind, clean and strong in body, resolute in will, and dauntless in spirit. He left his wife and young child for the service of his country and paid the last full measure of devotion gallantly.

This is the account that our young college and seminary men have given of themselves. It is enough to rebuke any flippant judgment that the former days were better than these or that our men had ceased to thrill to the call of duty and answer her imperial summons with their lives. This young chaplain was one of the most gifted and versatile of men. His eager mind never ceased its quest for truth. His sympathies were broad and his life was "clean as river sand."

The influence of such men must bring into being a still higher type of minister. Not only those who have

gone overseas and sacrificed health and life, but the men who have remained at home caring for the morale of communities, have shown that the American ministry had not fallen on evil days as the critics were so eager to assure us.

Donald Hankey discovered this, and out of his experience he wrote:

Indications are not wanting that the present crisis may evolve teachers of a new kind in the ranks of the clergy and the professors. Many clergy have enlisted in noncombatant corps, and must there have gained a much deeper sense of the needs of ordinary men than they ever acquired in the university, the clergy school, and the parish. Some of the younger dons have also plunged into life, and they may be expected to produce literature of a new type when they return to their studies.<sup>1</sup>

Every preacher ought to be thinking carefully about the final influence that the Great War is going to have on his life and his message. Time after time he ought to reflect carefully on the spiritual significance of the mighty conflict as it continues to transform his own point of view and the practical use to which he puts his talents. This will be a part of the devotional culture of the minister in these times of change. Is his message becoming more vital and real? Is the urgency of preaching increasing? Is there a sense of the power of religion in our words that was not there before? With such questions as these it will be possible to make the spiritual significance of the war a part of the increased equipment of the preacher.

Let us now consider how the modern preacher, thus enlarged in his ideals concerning his own task, is to

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 1, p. 183. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

serve the community in ways which were not apparent before the Great War.

Thousands of ministers have been obliged to decide that they would remain at home, carry on the work of the pulpit and parish, and render service necessary to the highest welfare of the neighborhood and nation in the familiar place and through the accepted methods of church work. In countless cases it would have been easier to have gone into camp and trench. The call of romance was there; the spirit of adventure lured every manly soul to the great conflict across the sea. There are no bugles blowing for those who "keep the home fires burning," and for a generation the man who won a cross of some kind somewhere will have the right of eminent appeal to the popular mind.

This was altogether a minor consideration to the man who settled the question of the place and character of the service that he would render in the war, yet it is not without significance and must be reckoned with in the factors that determine how we shall preach. The important matter for all ministers is that, whether they went abroad or stayed at home, they all shall interpret their work in larger terms and derive from the world-situation new energy and courage for an enlarged service. All who "stay by the stuff" must get some adequate discipline out of the experience that shall be commensurate with that which has been coming to the chaplains and the men in service overseas. *The peril of the minister in America just now is that he will catch no new vision of what it really means to be a preacher and pastor.* The conditions under which the chaplains and other Christian workers overseas or in the camps at home

worked have evolved new standards for preaching which will in time seep into the practice of the remotest country pulpit. The men who are meeting this situation know the keen joy of actually taking part in the reconstruction of the methods of preaching.

But in the home parish the external conditions still remain much as they were before the war began. Many young men are yet missing; there are new industrial problems to be faced; but the old church, the old services, the familiar families are all there, and the vast changes are still very far away. This tends to cause the minister who stayed at home to settle back into the familiar ways, preach about as he used to, make his calls in the easy round, and live in the old routine.

This means plain suicide in the modern church. Since 1914 the world has changed. We still dress about as we used to and continue to growl about life's little irritations. A man in the lounging-room of his club will still display such lack of perspective and proportion as permits him to interrupt the reading of international needs and policies with a peeved complaint at the quality of the bread served him at lunch. But still we do not think as we did four years ago and we never shall again. Our scale of values has been entirely upset. Conventional standards are broken up, and yet in the midst of all this it is perfectly possible for a minister to perform the established functions, go through the old motions, and "last" for some time in the midst of a patient parish not yet fully awake itself. The momentum of venerable methods picks up such a satisfied minister and bears him onward like a mummy on the Nile at flood. It is a fearful fact. A minister in the United

States today may be so busy doing fussy jobs and may so persuade himself that he is useful and necessary to the community that he may become blind as a mole to what is going on in the world around him. He sometimes knows the period of the Nicene Council better than he knows what has happened in Russia since the war began.

Ministers must wake up and get superbly alive now or they are lost. They must read and reason and decide critical questions. There is something bigger than chickens and parish favors lurking around the parsonages of the land. Ministers must feel the movements of the age and evaluate the changes that are taking place in the world around them. This is the common obligation that rests upon them, whether they have gone into distinct national and Christian service abroad or have made their equally important contribution to the highest welfare of the nation while remaining at home.

How can this be done? The continued responsibilities of the parish must be met with service that involves all the resources at the command of the minister. Sermons, visits, weddings, funerals, occasional addresses, community tasks—these have not been remitted by the War. They must be attended to, for they constitute the old task. We have no more time at our command; there is only the strength of the average man to be used in the work. But there are better tools at hand, and the time and strength at our disposal may be more economically used. The preacher must now dispose of his energies in a better way. Time must be made for reading, for serious thinking, for painstaking sermon preparation. These are dangerous days for the man who



is fluent in speech and can easily get away with a public address. As Dr. Crothers remarks, the instructions that accompany a fountain pen are appropriate to these ready speakers, "When this pen tends to flow too freely, it is a sign that it needs filling."

Almost anyone can consume the time set apart for the sermon in the order of public worship; too few men can really preach a clarifying, moving, and convincing sermon that shall set confused minds straight and bring them to great decisions. But this is the kind of preaching that we must have if the Christian church is to serve the present generation in the place of its supreme need. When a layman is forced to say, "I couldn't make head or tail out of it," in nine cases out of ten the difficulty is not with the head of the layman, but with the heads of the discourse. The sermon had neither head nor tail nor body, and—what is worse—it had no neck. The preachers of tomorrow must work as they never worked before. They cannot run errands or attend functions so extensively if they are to be God's prophets to a perplexed world.

The preacher never has been given a greater privilege than this. It ought to call out the unused energies of mind and spirit to a nobler service than ever has been rendered by the pulpit. It is the same call that the nation sent forth to its young men to defend its liberties, and it ought to be answered in the spirit with which the soldiers sailed for France.

The service of the preacher as a creator of public opinion cannot be overestimated in the modern age. In the churches gather the people who are representative of the highest ideals and the noblest living. Sunday



after Sunday the preacher has the privilege of speaking to them on the supreme subjects that can engage the mind and stir the emotions. It may seem at first glance as if he had scant opportunity to do any creative work in the precious "thirty minutes to raise the dead"; but the value of these times of quickening, if they are rightly used, is great beyond our present realization.

And it is not the great churches in the cities alone where this influence is felt most significantly. This has been put by Arthur Gleason in one of the timely books of the war:

What one cares very much to reach is the solid, silent public opinion of the smaller cities, the towns, and villages. The local storekeeper, the village doctor, the farmer, these are the men who make the real America—the America which responds slowly but irresistibly to a sound presentation of facts. The alert newspaper editor, the hustling real-estate man, the booster for a better-planned town, these citizens shape our public opinion. If once our loyal Middle Westerners know the wrong that has been done people just like ourselves, they will resent it as each of us resents it that has seen it.<sup>1</sup>

That which Mr. Gleason discerns here so accurately applies to the work of the preacher. It is in the little towns and among the scattered communities that the influences must be set in motion that are finally to carry the nation as a whole forward or backward in its policy and program. What New York City thinks is important; but what the villages of the whole country think is the final fact that determines the policy of the nation. What the small community thinks is determined in so slight degree by what the pulpit in that community stands for week by week.

<sup>1</sup>*Our Part in the Great War*, p. 275. Copyright by Frederick A. Stokes Co., publishers.

If ever there was a call for ministers who are enlightened on matters of international moment it is now. If there is a preacher anywhere who is contented in these earnest days to go on saying the same old words, going through the same old motions, it would seem as if he had embalmed his own mind and soul. Here is our civilization faced with the most searching questions and exigent problems of history; here is the church, even in the smallest community, charged with the sacred and solemn responsibility of creating the ideals that will guide the nation through the re-making of the world; and now and again we meet a minister who seeks to interpret his task as that of watching the rival denomination on the other corner and saying over, like a wearisome parrot, the old phrases that the fathers wore out and that the present generation cares nothing about. The very spirit of the times calls for a renewal of intellectual energy and determined utterance that will help create in the minds of the people the ideals which will bear the country through its time of renewal. It takes hard work to measure up to this trust; no minister who is inclined to indolence or arrogance can last long now. To help create public opinion today is the greatest privilege that has ever come to the preacher.

Again, the modern preacher must be a man who can give courage and steadfastness to the people. This was one of the chief sources of strength to the prophets. The words of Isa. 40:1 are intensely binding today, "Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, said your God." For the world is weary and sad. The cost of this carnage has grown beyond all the power of man to estimate, and the weight of the burden that rests on the souls of the

parish is heavier than ever before in the history of the world.

There is only one man in the community who is commissioned and prepared to speak the words of comfort and hope that the people crave. He is the preacher. His task has been defined in the work of the prophets and set forth in the mission of Jesus. When the prophets comforted Israel they set the modern preacher an example; when Jesus brought hope and strength to human hearts he defined the message of his modern representatives, the preachers of the good news of comfort.

But this does not mean that the preacher does not face the tragic meaning of the war and understand just how terrible is the misery that it has brought. The word of hope today must be spoken out of full knowledge of the grief that has swept over the world. There is a sort of blind optimism that dwells in a fool's paradise and cries "peace, peace" when there is no peace. The modern preacher does not live there, and his message is not an irrational assurance couched in idle words. We must win the message from the severest wrestling with the world-situation at its worst, and must face all the facts before seeking to comfort the people.

Of course this means that we have won firm faith in the rightness of our cause, and believe that in the end that which is just and good cannot be defeated. These are times when the old lines of Browning take on new significance. He dared describe himself as

One who never turned his back but marched breast forward,  
Never doubted clouds would break, never dreamed, though  
right were worsted, wrong would triumph,  
Held we fall to rise, are baffled to fight better,  
Sleep to wake.

The literature produced by the war is full of references to these sources of courage in the rightness of the cause. Richardson Wright puts it in this way: "The invulnerable armor you must wear in these days is an unfailing belief in the righteousness of our cause."<sup>1</sup> The Bishop of London in a sermon says: "The positive comfort is this—God has never allowed deviltry, lust, and tyranny finally to triumph in His world."<sup>2</sup>

This means that the same just and true cause which has finally triumphed in the Great War can be established in stable institutions, not only in the new, free states of Middle Europe and in vast and bewildered Russia, but throughout the world. The grounds of this faith still rest in the fact that the Lord God Almighty reigns in a world that is ultimately moral.

It is a glorious mission to be such a messenger of courage to one's generation. The poets have been singing in a way to put heart into the men and women who struggle and suffer. Dyneley Hussey has expressed this message of courage in one of the war sonnets as follows:

Alone amid the battle-din untouched  
Stands out one figure beautiful, serene;  
No grime of smoke nor reeking blood hath smutched  
The virgin brow of this unconquered queen.  
She is the Joy of Courage vanquishing  
The unstilled tremors of the fearful heart;  
And it is she that bids the poet sing,  
And gives to each the strength to bear his part.

<sup>1</sup> *Letters to the Mother of a Soldier*, p. 12. Copyright by Frederick A. Stokes Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 135. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

Her eye shall not be dimmed, but as a flame  
Shall light the distant ages with its fire,  
That men may know the glory of her name,  
That purified our souls of fear's desire.  
And she doth calm our sorrow, soothe our pain  
And she shall lead us back to peace again.<sup>1</sup>

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON COMFORT AND COURAGE

### SUGGESTION I

"They help every one his neighbor; and every one saith to his brother, Be of good courage" (Isa. 41:6).

#### COUNSELS OF COURAGE

Show how we are influenced by the mood and the words of our neighbors and comrades. In these days when it is so easy to lose heart through perplexity and loss every Christian must hearten his friends and neighbors.

- I. Encouragement is often the most practical help that can be given.
- II. Encouragement can best be given by those who know and share the same lot.

### SUGGESTION 2

"Be of good courage, and let us play the man for our people, and for the cities of our God: and Jehovah do that which seemeth him good" (I Chron. 19:13).

#### A SOLDIER'S FAITH

The text expresses three items in the soldier's ideal and faith:

- I. Resolute action. Play the man. The individual counts. The martial virtues must be realized.
- II. Representative service. The individual struggles on behalf of the people. All brave effort in war or peace is "for our people and cities."
- III. Reliance on God. "As God wills it." This in the end gives the courage that lasts.

<sup>1</sup>*A Treasury of War Poetry*, p. 179. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

### SUGGESTION 3

"Be strong and of good courage, be not afraid nor dismayed for the King of Assyria, nor for all the multitude that is with him; for there is a greater with us than with him: with him is an arm of flesh; but with us is Jehovah our God to help us, and to fight our battles" (I Chron. 32:7, 8).

#### OUTNUMBERED BUT NOT OUTGENERALED

- I. The foe ahead. His resources, commanders, program: an arm of flesh.
- II. The resources behind. Our strength, our program, our faith: God.
- III. The courageous behavior warranted by these conditions.

### SUGGESTION 4

"Only be strong and very courageous" (Josh. 1:7).

#### THE SOURCES OF COURAGE

Introduction: a) Joshua on the verge of a great endeavor needing courage.

b) Courage counts like a host.

- I. Sources of courage in history. "As God had been with Moses."
  - a) The exodus. His own experience at Kadesh-barnea.
  - b) Our own history as a nation.
  - c) Our personal history.
- II. Sources in the law.
  - a) We also know the right and can decide for it.
  - b) Decision for the right brings courage and victory.
- III. Sources in our comrades.
  - a) What Joshua meant to the host.
  - b) What the host meant to Joshua.
- IV. Sources in God.
  - a) The invisible host is greatest and strongest.
  - b) God really works with us.



SUGGESTION 5

"And I said, This is my infirmity;

But I will remember the years of the right hand of the Most High" (Ps. 77:10).

RESERVES IN GOD

- I. The greatest of sorrows is to think that God has forgotten.
- II. The greatest of resources is to be sure that God reigns and cares and helps.

SUGGESTION 6

"And Caleb stilled the people before Moses, and said, Let us go up at once, and possess it; for we are well able to overcome it" (Num. 13:30).

FORWARD IN FAITH

- I. The difficulties counted.
- II. The resources reckoned.
- III. God trusted fully.
- IV. Immediate action urged.

Compare: "But my servant Caleb, because he had another spirit within him, and hath followed me fully, him will I bring into the land whereinto he went; and his seed shall possess it" (Num. 14:24).

SUGGESTION 7

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you; and ye shall be comforted in Jerusalem" (Isa. 66:13).

INFINITE COMFORT

Develop this gracious and tender text according to the way in which a mother comforts a child.

- I. With intimate knowledge and sympathy.
- II. Suiting the means to the end in each case.
- III. With unyielding patience.
- IV. With sacrificial love.

SUGGESTION 8

"Weeping may come in to lodge at even,  
But joy cometh in the morning" (Ps. 30:5b).

## THE TWO GUESTS

- I. Sorrow that tarries for a night.
  - a) No home escapes him.
  - b) He brings his measure of tears.
  - c) But he is a transient guest.
- II. Joy that comes in the morning.
  - a) This is the soul's natural condition.
  - b) He brings his treasure of love, peace, and joy.
  - c) He abides permanently.

## SUGGESTION 9

"He healeth the broken in heart,  
 And bindeth up their wounds.  
 He counteth the number of the stars;  
 He calleth them all by their names" (Ps. 147:3, 4).

"STAR COUNTING AND HEART HEALING"<sup>1</sup>

No finer title can be taken for a sermon on this noble text than the one caused by Percy Ainsworth. The sermon itself is developed with the characteristic skill and deep insight of this lamented young British preacher. As he says, "Only the Infinite can heal the soul. God could not minister to strained hearts if the stars were too much for him."

- I. The Infinite creator counting the stars.
- II. The Infinite Father healing hurt souls.

## SUGGESTION 10

"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort, who comforteth us in all our affliction, that we may be able to comfort them that are in any affliction, through the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God" (II Cor. 1:3, 4).

<sup>1</sup> See *The Pilgrim Church*, p. 29.

HEALED TO HELP

- I. The hearts of men need help and healing.
- II. God is the great Comforter and Healer.
- III. How have we been comforted?
- IV. How may we comfort others?

SUGGESTION II

“And when they came to Marah, they could not drink of the waters of Marah, for they were bitter: Therefore the name of it was called Marah [bitter].”

“And they came to Elim, where were twelve springs of water, and threescore and ten palm trees; and they encamped there by the waters” (Exod. 15:23, 27).

FROM BITTERNESS TO BLESSING

- I. The meaning of Marah's bitter waters in the experience of the present age.
- II. The lure and promise of Elim's palm trees upon the horizon.
- III. The conditions of the march from Marah to Elim.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MORAL AIMS OF THE NEW ERA

Just as the pulpit was one of the chief agents in defining the moral aims of the Great War, so the whole popular conception of the tasks of re-making the world must be determined largely by what the preachers say. The Christian pulpit must bear a leading share in determining the moral and spiritual aims of the new era.

It is immediately apparent that the conception of the tasks of peace must be determined by the results of war; and the duties and privileges of Christian America are defined for her by the moral meaning of the mighty event that called them into being. Christian preaching cannot for a generation escape the spell of those vast ethical and religious questions which were raised by the Great War. There is no law by which men can gather figs from thistles; and unless America was right, profoundly right, as she entered upon and prosecuted the war in alliance with the defenders of freedom and justice, unless our soldiers died for a noble cause, there is no hope that the world to be re-made from this experience will rest on firm moral foundations. It is no longer necessary to preach on the moral aims of the Great War; but no preacher can fit his message to the mental and moral mood of the new era who is not clear in his own mind concerning the significance of the four and a half years that followed the beginning of that dreadful

August in 1914. The preacher must still wrestle with the question of the moral meaning of war.

This is a severe test. Hundreds of ministers have been faithful workers in the cause of peace. They have been members of the various organizations that have been at work in the interests of international unity and good-will. They have preached sermons on the subject of universal peace and have interpreted the teachings of Jesus as bearing positively upon it.

Then came the War. At first it seemed as if we could carry out the part of a neutral in the great conflict. The terrible character of the struggle, as it developed a type of savagery unknown before in the history of fratricidal warfare, intensified the instinctive horror against war on the part of preachers. Probably the attitude of thousands is represented by that of Dr. Charles E. Jefferson, of New York. He had been one of the most efficient and forceful champions of the peace cause in America. He summed up his impressions with his characteristic clarity of style in the volume entitled *What the War Is Teaching*, published in 1916. But when the declaration of war by America came, Dr. Jefferson accepted the situation and met the new conditions loyally.

There have been a few ministers who have been unable to follow in this path. They were committed to a radical pacifist position and found it impossible to justify the War in any way. The ground on which they stand may be understood by reading either or both of two books: *New Wars for Old* (1916) by John Haynes Holmes, and *The Outlook for Religion* (1918) by W. E. Orchard. Dr. Holmes makes a clear statement of

radical pacifism. Dr. Orchard writes with trenchant force.

Certainly, however, in the constructive work of the new day even those who were not able to justify the use of military force will be enlisted with complete conviction and unity of purpose in the mighty work of rebuilding the world. Even such men cannot work without regard to the principles which were decisive in leading America to assume her part in the Great War and prosecute it to the end defined by her allies and herself at the beginning.

To the vast majority of Christian preachers the moral and spiritual aim of the Great War presented no insoluble problem. They were able to think their way through into agreement with their brethren in England and France. They supported the government in its decisions and entered with complete devotion into the constructive aims which are to be realized, at the cost of what struggle we do not yet foresee, in the building of a new world for mankind.

Since the influence of the moral purpose of the Great War is so vital to the preacher's work in the new era, it is necessary often to review the fundamental questions that were involved in that gigantic struggle of arms. Let us undertake this within brief limits.

To anyone who is inclined to question whether or not we might have remained neutral longer than we did or even permanently, it is a pleasure to commend the second section of Arthur Gleason's *Our Part in the Great War*. In six short chapters under the caption "Why Some Americans Are Neutral" Mr. Gleason shows how a time comes in every great moral question when neutral-



ity is no longer possible if one is to keep his integrity and self-respect. The world is united too closely to allow any part of it to suffer great wrongs without involving all the rest. Thus the time comes when active participation in a great struggle is a responsibility placed by God himself upon an individual and a nation. Under those conditions

'Tis man's perdition to be safe  
When for the truth he ought to die.

Mr. Gleason accepts the War "as a revelation of the human spirit in one of its supreme struggles between right and wrong." And in the presence of such a struggle it is impossible for a Christian to be neutral. There is only one side to the question, and only one side on which a true man can stand. It is impossible to read the report that Mr. Gleason makes of his personal observations in France without feeling that the utmost exertion of force was necessary to curb the plundering lust of the nation that ran amuck in the midst of modern civilization. The Great War was the tremendous assertion of the moral idealism of the world against the greatest enemy of human welfare that ever has arisen in the course of history.

But there is another leader of American thought who has written a little book which for power to set the issue forth in convincing fashion is unsurpassed. In *The Challenge of the Present Crisis* by Harry Emerson Fosdick the perplexed preacher will find help for mind and heart. The discussion is not long; but just as Dr. Fosdick never touches anything that he does not illuminate, here he has done one of the most useful and

necessary bits of service that he had yet performed in his most useful life.

Dr. Fosdick writes out of his heart in the whole matter. He has felt precisely as nearly all the ministers in the country felt from the outbreak of the conflict. He has not changed his mind at all; war is still to him a folly and a horror. Perhaps his spirit in the discussion is best revealed in the remarkable prayer with which he pleads the cause of America:

O God, bless our Country! We lament before Thee the cruel necessity of war. But what could we do? Our dead by hundreds lie beneath the sea; the liberties that our sires baptized with their blood and handed down to us in trust, so that they are not ours alone but all humanity's, are torn in shreds; and a foe is loose against us whom we have not chosen, whom we have not aggrieved, and who in his will to conquer counts solemn oaths to be but scraps of paper and the chivalry of the seas an empty name. We have grown weary, to the sickness of our souls, sitting comfortable here, while others pour their blood like water forth for those things which alone can make this earth a decent place for men to live upon. What could we do? With all the evils of our nation's life, that we acknowledge and confess with shame, we yet plead before Thee that we have not wanted war, that we hate no man, that we covet no nation's possessions, that we have nothing for ourselves to gain from war, unless it be a clear conscience and a better earth for all the nations to live and grow in. We plead before Thee that if patience and good-will could have won the day, we gladly should have chosen them, and patience long since would have had her perfect work. And now we lay our hand upon our sword. Since we must draw it, O God, help us to play the man and to do our part in teaching ruthlessness once for all what it means to wake the sleeping lion of humanity's conscience.<sup>1</sup>

One knows after reading this that the discussion is not an essay, but rather the report of "the struggle of

<sup>1</sup>*The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 46. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

the writer to see his way and keep his soul alive in this terrific generation." Dr. Fosdick understands the grim meaning of that struggle through which many a minister has been passing as he has wrestled with the problem thrown upon him by the War and has tried to decide just what and how he could preach to his people. As he says, "One of the most important battles of this generation is being fought behind closed doors, where men are making up their minds whether this war is to leave them social pessimists or not."

But the tendency to loss of hope was not closed with the turn of the tide of battle in the Great War. The civilized world is sure that it must work its way back painfully to its new heritage. In the report of the first return of the Belgians to their ruined homes a newspaper correspondent gave a vivid picture of the scene. These stricken households had been waiting for months and years until they might return; they started at the instant permission was given. They carried the wreck of their households saved in their precipitous flight and guarded during their exile. What was before them? Was anything left from the ravage of the enemy? They trudged brokenly, not yet daring to smile. And this is a parable of the new day. We have been hurt with the wounds of war. Now we must hope again. But the grim sense of wonder and the threat of despair will not cease. The pulpit must help the world to recover its faith and courage.

Another book, whose value is quite out of proportion to its size and which is invaluable to a minister who is seeking to think his way clearly through the present situation, is *The Christian Man, the Church and the War*

by Robert E. Speer.<sup>1</sup> In this volume Mr. Speer discusses the Christian attitude toward the Great War, the function of the church, and the relation of Christianity to the international ideal. He has the clearness and force of Dr. Fosdick and his conclusions are equally well grounded and assuring.

Mr. Speer handles nonresistance in a masterful way, with clear-headed and convincing argument which does full justice to the teaching of Jesus and saves it from misinterpretation. It ought to relieve the familiar words, "Resist not him that is evil," from the perversion to which it is often subjected.

Mr. Speer puts his own position clearly in these significant words:

Such a war as the American nation believes it is waging now, a war in defense of human rights, of weak nations, of innocent and inoffensive peoples, an unselfish war in which the nation seeks absolutely nothing for itself and is willing to spend everything in order that all men, including its enemies, may be free. This is a kind of war which we believe to be justified and right in principle in a world in which, at this time, those ends can only be defended in this way. War is an evil and is not to be tolerated unless the only alternative offered is a worse evil. And to let the wrong have free course, to let might triumph over justice is a worse evil than resistance.<sup>2</sup>

The book is full of epigrams and clarifying statements, such as:

"Life is a sacred thing, but there are times when some lives must be sacrificed that others may be saved."<sup>3</sup>

"War is killing, but a war against war is a war against killing."<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Copyright (1918) by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> P. 16.

<sup>4</sup> P. 17.

"The one war that can be right and not all evil is the war that will end war forever."<sup>1</sup>

"[Jesus] clearly bade us to yield our own rights, but he did not bid us to yield our duties. If one smites us on our own cheek we are to turn to him the other, but if he smites a little child on one cheek he will not smite it on the other if we have the strength and love of Christ in us."<sup>2</sup>

At this point it will be worth while to look at the way in which men of earnest spirit and profound seriousness have looked at the War. There is no clearer vision on the part of any man than that possessed by Rev. Robert F. Horton, of England, and this is what he says:

It is one of the greatest moments in the life of the world that we are living through now; one of the greatest steps in the progress of humanity is about to be taken; in human evolution nothing has happened before like this; it is the great step by which nations raise themselves into the moral life and learn to behave to one another on a moral principle and in accordance with the eternal laws of God.<sup>3</sup>

Donald Hankey put the motives of the soldier, which must also be the motives of the citizens who are to carry on the work of the soldiers, as follows:

If we fought from blood-lust or hate, war would be sordid. But if we fight as only a Christian may, that friendship and peace with our foes may become possible, then fighting is our duty, and our fasting and dirt, our wounds and our death, are our beauty and God's glory.<sup>4</sup>

Coningsby Dawson interpreted the motives of the soldiers as follows:

No matter what the cost and how many of us have to give our lives, this war must be so finished that war may be forever at an

<sup>1</sup> P. 22.

<sup>2</sup> P. 27.

<sup>3</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 81. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

<sup>4</sup> *A Student in Arms*, I, 241. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

end. If the devils who plan wars could only see the abysmal result of their handiwork! Give them one day in the trenches under shell-fire when their lives aren't worth a five minute's purchase—or one day carrying the wounded through this tortured country, or one day in a Red Cross train. No one can imagine the damnable waste and Christlessness of this battering of human flesh. The only way that this war can be made holy is by making it so thorough that war will be finished for all time.<sup>1</sup>

Another soldier wrote:

War is a boastful, beastly business; but if we don't plunge into it now, we lower the whole pitch of posterity's life, leave them with only some rusty relics of racial honor. To enter into this material hell now is to win for our successors a kind of immaterial heaven. There will be an ease and splendor in their attitude toward life which a peaceful hand would now destroy. It is for the sake of that spiritual ease and enrichment of life that we fling everything aside now to learn to deal death.<sup>2</sup>

It is unnecessary to call more witnesses; but one of the most tender and noble of all the war poems must be quoted here. This sonnet sets forth the inner purpose of the war. It also shows how the preacher in the new era must also be true to the "dream, born in a herdsman's shed," and to "the secret Scripture of the poor."

TO MY DAUGHTER BETTY, THE GIFT OF GOD<sup>3</sup>

In wiser days, my darling rosebud, blown  
 To beauty proud as was your mother's prime,  
 In that desired, delayed, incredible time,  
 You'll ask why I abandoned you, my own,  
 And the dear heart that was your baby throne,  
 To dice with death. And, oh! they'll give you rhyme  
 And reason: some will call the thing sublime,  
 And some decry it in a knowing tone.

<sup>1</sup> *Carry On*, p. 59. Copyright by John Lane Co.

<sup>2</sup> Dixon Scott, quoted in *The Good Soldier*, p. 72.

<sup>3</sup> Thomas Kettle's "battle-field legacy to his little girl," quoted in Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 29. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.



So here, while the mad guns curse overhead  
And tired men sigh, with mud for couch and floor,  
Know that we fools, now with the foolish dead,  
Died not for flag, nor king, nor emperor,  
But for a dream, born in a herdsman's shed,  
And for the secret Scripture of the poor.

This deep desire in the hearts of the men who have risked their lives in what they believe to be the last great war of history is matched by the insight of some of the noblest souls of the day. For example, we find Harry Emerson Fosdick saying: "The conclusion of this world-drama, now at its climax, need no more see the triumph of war than our father's generation saw the triumph of slavery. If we will, we may have another victory for Christian ideals."<sup>1</sup>

There is no better definition of the moral aim of the nation in entering upon the Great War than is to be found in the tremendous sentence of President Wilson himself, a sentence which will perhaps become significant in all history as a clear and mighty utterance of a great national purpose:

The object of this war is to deliver the free peoples of the world from the menace and the actual power of a vast military establishment controlled by an irresponsible government, which, having secretly planned to dominate the world, proceeded to carry the plan out without regard either to the sacred obligations of treaty or the long-established practices and long-cherished principles of international action and honor; which chose its own time for the war; delivered its blow fiercely and suddenly; stopped at no barrier, either of law or of mercy; swept a whole continent within the tide of blood—not the blood of soldiers only, but the blood of innocent women and children also, and of the helpless poor—and now stands balked but not defeated, the enemy of four-fifths of the world.

<sup>1</sup> *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 20. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

Another statement, almost equally forceful, comes from President A. Lawrence Lowell, of Harvard University:

Two principles are arrayed against each other in battle today. One is that might makes right, that the fruits of the earth belong to the people who can take them, that there is no moral obligation superior to the welfare of the state, and that the nation strongest in arms is justified in using that strength relentlessly to push aside and trample under foot any people which stands in its path of expansion. The other is that all nations, great and small, are entitled to respect, that all people have a right to justice and that every being capable of suffering has a claim on the sympathy of man. The struggle is between autocratic, pitiless use of military strength on one side, and liberty, justice, and humanity on the other.

Now the message of the preacher today is defined by just these mighty imperatives which are set forth in the quotations that have been given. If ever a solemnizing sense of responsibility were laid upon a group of public teachers and leaders it is now as the preachers of America face the task of carrying on the tremendous energies and ideals released by the Great War into the constructive program of their generation. The responsibility to build so that these millions shall have not died in vain shakes us from all fooling and sets our hearts aflame. If the responsibilities of the preacher during the war period were great, they are still greater in the era of rebuilding; for he has now the sacred task of so defining the moral aims of the age as shall insure the conservation of such sacrifice of life and love as the world never has known before. Two quotations from a recent book set this forth clearly:

The responsibility to the dead to build the future they died for is to-day the unargued impulse of all bereaved; the future itself will clarify this popular impulse and transform it into a

binding obligation that will be the clue to all emergent activities, both mental and material.<sup>1</sup>

That no one who has died for a great cause is ever wasted, that the only right expression of grief is a fresh self-dedication to the cause the loved one loved, is an attitude toward loss that may well pass from the army of warriors to that greater army of civilians; it is already the secret of the strange resilience of sorrowing thousands.<sup>2</sup>

When the last soldier shall have returned from overseas and the din of battle seems like an old story and echo from far away, the superb work of the American preacher as the definer and defender of the new ideals born in the struggle in Europe will only have begun. This is the greatest service that the Christian ministry ever has been called upon to render.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON THE SPIRITUAL AIMS OF THE NEW ERA

### SUGGESTION I

"And they shall build the old wastes, they shall raise up the former desolations, and they shall repair the waste cities, the desolations of many generations.

"For I, Jehovah, love justice, I hate robbery for a burnt-offering; and I will give them their recompense in truth, and I will make an everlasting covenant with them" (Isa. 61:4, 8).

### THE ARMY OF RESTORATION

Introduce the subject with a vivid, brief sketch of the battered war region of France.

- I. The god of justice. No work of restoration will be adequate unless it rests upon the very nature and will of God, who (negatively) will not accept the results of robbery in place of ritual and (positively) loves justice.

<sup>1</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 98. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

- II. The task of restoration. This means the lavish gift of money, time, and strength to replace what has been destroyed (a) physically, (b) intellectually, (c) spiritually.
- III. The covenant of divine love. There ought to be a great spiritual result from the war. A new and everlasting relationship between God and man ought to issue from the War. This must be accomplished by Christian evangelism of the noblest type.

## SUGGESTION 2

“A bruised reed will he not break, and a dimly burning wick will he not quench: he will bring forth justice in truth. He will not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set justice in the earth; and the isles shall wait for his law” (Isa. 42: 3, 4).

### BUILDING A NEW WORLD

- I. Sympathy and tenderness. The whole world is broken and smoking. The task of restoration must begin with pity and sympathy. Hunger and grief are not national matters.
- II. Justice in truth. A fine statement of the ideal of the builders. “Truth is the strong thing.”
- III. Courage and patience. The builders of the new world cannot fail in their purpose; but they must not be discouraged. The great task will take time.
- IV. The whole earth. We can be satisfied now with nothing less than an organized world. All the nations and the far-off islands must be embraced within the sweep of our building plans.

## SUGGESTION 3

“And I will restore to you the years that the locust hath eaten” (Joel 2:25).

### RECOVERING THE LOST YEARS

Sketch the vivid picture of the loss caused by the locusts, caterpillars, and worms. The destruction was so great that it could be accurately described as even involving the very years that it had endured.

Now these are to be restored. The measure of the destruction is to be the standard of the constructive task. A still better world must be made for all mankind. This suggests:

- I. New homes for men's bodies.
- II. New quests for men's minds.
- III. New standards for men's moral life.
- IV. New satisfactions for men's emotions.
- V. New range for men's souls.

#### SUGGESTION 4

"And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places; thou shalt raise up the foundations of many generations; and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in" (Isa. 58:12).

#### ROAD-MAKERS

This text contains four significant descriptions of the way in which the Christian forces of the world must construct a new world:

- I. Building the waste places. This is first of all an economic task; but it is moral and spiritual as well.
- II. Laying deep and permanent foundations. In part this involves repairing those that have been destroyed; it also involves laying new foundations for a long future.
- III. Repairing the breaches. Another statement of I, in which the spiritual task is to be emphasized.
- IV. Making roads. The value and permanence of roads. Here they are so necessary and permanent that men are said to "dwell" in them. Secure roads for humanity must be made now; then they will not wander into violence and hatred again but will dwell in the paths of peace.

## CHAPTER IV

### WHERE TO FIND THE SERMON STUFF

This is a practical question of the greatest importance. Just as a carpenter must know where to find his tools and materials, and must be able to turn to them quickly, so the preacher in these busy days must know where the stuff for his sermons is to be found and with what kind of tools he can work most swiftly and surely as he constructs his discourse. The preacher is a literary craftsman as well as a prophet. Unless, therefore, he is swift and skilful in commanding his time, tools, and material, he will work in clumsy fashion.

a) *The products of earnest thinking.*—The world-situation challenges the preacher today as never before to be a serious, alert thinker. The first demand upon the person who is to speak to the people is that he shall have come to close grips with the big ideas that are bombarding us. This means thinking—and thinking is hard work, harder than sawing four-foot maple butts into stove lengths with a dull saw. As a matter of fact, there are relatively few ministers who are in the habit of thinking steadily and consecutively for thirty minutes without being interrupted by the disturbing idea of a parish problem or a raise in their salary. We dawdle and indulge in reverie, but we do not think; and these are times that call for the most serious engagement of the preacher's mind with the situation in which we are to lead the people.



Thinking is facing the new world in a new temper. At a reception a gentleman remarked, as he looked over toward a Doctor of Divinity who seemed deep in solitary meditation apart from the crowd, "Dr. X seems to be thinking deeply!" "No, indeed," replied the friend, "Dr. X is not thinking; he is just rearranging his prejudices." There is a subtle danger that all ministers will fall into a habit like this and think that they really are thinking when all that they are actually doing is to review, renew, and readjust their well-committed *a priori* notions.

When Catch-my-Pal Patterson gets an audience on its feet to register their resolution concerning the use of strong drink he asks them to double up the right fist, punch an imaginary antagonist, and say in unison, "We will see this thing through." It is high time that the Christian ministers of America doubled up a vigorous intellectual fist and gave an uppercut to our urgent religious problems, saying together, "We will think this thing through."

When a subject has laid hold on a preacher or a text has commanded him, the first question often asked is, What can I read? That question, if it pushes itself forward into first place, is a sheer impertinence. The only first question that is legitimate is, What does this text say? or, What do I think about this subject? If preachers would analyze their texts, parse them grammatically, and study the exact meaning of every word, we would be spared many a foolish sermon. Having done this, if the method of developing the sermon is textual—but having done it in some fashion anyhow—the preacher's duty is to think and think and think, until

he is hungry and fatigued. Our sermon stuff is not mixed sufficiently with our own brains, and the laymen know it. This fact cannot be disguised by using the language of Zion; it is a vain ruse to "holler loud."

No preacher can respect himself or expect his congregation to respect him until he has sweat mentally over his sermon. Logic must precede rhetoric. Clear thinking is the only safeguard for the oratorical gift. Exhaust your own mental resources; then bring up the reserves in commentaries and books.

b) *The Bible*.—The Bible always has been the primary source of material for the preacher. It was the gospel that created the Scriptures, and therefore we return most naturally to them when we are seeking fresh definitions of the gospel. Ministers must go back to the Bible to discover the larger meaning of their message and the sources of comfort and hope that must be at their command if they would serve the people in these times of perplexity and pain.

There could not be a better preparation for preaching today than to read the Bible consecutively and carefully, with the needs of the hour uppermost in one's mind, in order to gain a new grasp upon the message of the Scriptures to our war-wasted world. Three months spent on "the Book" in this way would bring vision and power to every preacher in rich measure.

In reading the Bible through with this homiletic purpose in mind we do not need to use the slow and painstaking methods of the exegetical scholar. What we are after is the message of the Bible to the life of today. Therefore we may read more swiftly than we could if we were carrying on technical Bible study.

Use a notebook, cards of standard size, or separate sheets of manuscript paper, and note, as you read, striking texts, points that may be used in sermons already "on the stocks," appropriate illustrations that will fit the needs of the time. The product of one month's work in this way will furnish sermon subjects and vital material for preaching to cover well-nigh a year.

Go to the Bible first. Read and study the Bible as never before. Lay the whole universe under tribute for the material to be used in your sermon; but begin with the Bible and work out from it. Our preaching would take on new reality and power if we would thus restore the Bible to the pulpit as the first source of substance for preaching. No other single supply is so fertile and constant in truth for the times.

In thus reading the Bible through with the homiletic purpose dominant in our thought, we shall find that the particular parts of the book take on new meaning. For example: The early records are full of suggestion concerning the preservation of the children of Israel in their escape from bitter bondage and their establishment in a new home. The Book of Judges gives us a vivid background for the teaching of the prophets and the ideals of Jesus. It reveals the way in which a partial conception of God, true for its time but not true for ours, inspires a kind of patriotism and religious passion that matches its narrow range and limited vision.

Then the preacher turns to the Psalms and finds them fertile in material for preaching in the present age. These great songs reflect the various moods of the individual and the nation in periods of peril from enemies, in captivity, and in restoration and renewal of life.

The shock of war may be felt throughout the Hebrew Psalter. Run through the word "enemy" as it is found in a concordance and note how often it occurs in the Psalms. At least seventy times it appears in Young. In the name of the nation during times of distress these old singers uttered their laments, their loyalty, and their faith in the future of the repentant people. This makes the Psalms a treasure for texts and material for our own age.

Then we turn to the Prophets. Here we find ourselves at once in a world that is closely akin to our own. As has been said: "It was the Assyrian terror, an incomparably worse thing, you remember, than any Belgian horror today (for the most ruthless Prussian is a very tame person, indeed, compared with the Assyrian), that awakened the soul of Israel."<sup>1</sup>

Any preacher seeking material for his work may turn to a fresh study of the prophets of Israel and he will be richly rewarded. He will discover the meaning of confident trust in God, an optimism that refuses to be repressed, and a final loyalty to the spiritual meaning of the universe. All these are necessary in the message of any preacher who is to bring real help to communities and congregations which are waiting for the voice of a prophet in a world re-made by war.

Then the preacher will study the gospels just now with new eagerness in order that he may gain a fresh conception of Christ and the Kingdom of God. These two great subjects are central in any distinctly Christian message to the modern world; and every Christian needs a larger and more vital idea of them. Many

<sup>1</sup>Horton, *Christ and the World at War*, p. 43. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

books have been written concerning both subjects. Let us not go to these first, however; let us read the gospels again and again. Let us study them profoundly. Preachers must get into the very heart of the New Testament. It is better to do this than to work through books on the person and teaching of Jesus. Such a careful study of the Four Gospels, with a careful discrimination between the synoptics and John, will give a preacher a new and firmer grasp on his message.

Then, in order that the significance of personal union with Christ and the ideal of the Kingdom may be understood, the epistles ought to be studied once more. They have more life than doctrine in them, and they yield many a suggestion as to how Christian truth is to be applied concretely in the actual conditions under which men and women live today.

c) *The war literature.*—The mass of literature that has been poured out from the press during the past four years is so vast and bewildering that one is inclined instinctively to turn from it in dismay. If there were time to read it all, or even if the best volumes were available on the meager book money of the average minister, it might seem as if we were warranted in trying to work through this vast field with some degree of profit. As it is, we tend to give it up.

Look first at the books which have been sent without cost to the majority of ministers in regular pastorates. The larger part of these, of course, have been concerned with the moral aims of the war. After making a fair number of inquiries one is satisfied that only a small part of this free literature is read by the average minister. As a matter of fact, we do not prize highly that for which



we pay nothing. But there have been many valuable books and pamphlets distributed from England and America which would have been well worth reading by the ministers to whom they have come without cost. Among these are Cardinal Mercier's *The Voice of Belgium*, and Arnold Toynbee's *The German Terror in France*. These are graphic and trustworthy. They give many a keen point for preaching in these days.

Turning to the more general literature, one is amazed at the fine quality of it. Casalis, Hankey, Tiplady, Eddy, Barrès, Winifred Kirkland, and many others have interpreted the meaning of the War on its moral and religious side in such a way that the preacher can speak to his people on the basis of their authority with clarifying positiveness. It is a joy to read this fine descriptive interpretation of the greatest events of history. One feels the kindling glow of it. It is easier to preach after an hour spent with Hankey. The whole is so human and real! The chaplains and padres were close to real men and actual life. Their reflections were not abstract. They knew and felt with the men who were fighting and suffering. It is stimulating. Religious problems take on reality; sins cease to be phenomena for theological investigation; they are real. The virtues walk the solid earth once more. The influence of this literature will be profound and wholesome on preaching.

d) *Current magazine and newspaper articles.*—The amount of writing that one finds in the magazines and newspapers bearing on religious subjects since the Great War began is astonishing. Leading editorials on some phase of moral or religious life appear in the daily



newspapers. The magazines are taking up ethical and religious problems as never before.

There are two magazines which offer rich resources to the preacher. The first of these is the *Atlantic Monthly*. Every preacher ought to have access to this publication. The manner in which it has covered the moral and religious aspects of the War is most praiseworthy. The article by Dr. Odell challenged the preacher and woke us up. The writers are men and women of international reputation; their work is most valuable. The second magazine which is full of material is the weekly *Literary Digest*. The variety of matter to be found here is marked. The cartoons, the quotations, the religious section, the review of current events—all these are profitable to the preacher. It seems to us the best weekly for the minister's general purpose. It does not have the literary and original quality of the *Outlook* and the *Independent*. Probably mention should be made of other magazines; but these seem to the writer best adapted for the preacher's particular work.

Watch the editorial columns of the daily papers! There are utterances to be found there now that were unknown five years ago. Take such an editorial as this from the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, in which Henry Watterson writes:

Surely the future looks black enough, yet it holds a hope, a single hope. One, and one power only, can arrest the descent and save us. That is the Christian religion. Democracy is but a side issue. The paramount issue underlying the issue of Democracy is the religion of Christ, and Him crucified; the bedrock of civilization; the source and resource of all that is worth having in the world that is, that gives promise in the world to come; not as an abstraction; not as a huddle of sects and factions; but

as a mighty force and principle of being. . . . If the world is to be saved from destruction—it will be saved alone by the Christian religion.

Such an editorial as this can be used in a sermon with altogether unique and telling force. It does not come from a salaried and professional representative of a Christian body. It is the spontaneous expression of the faith and hope of a layman; as such it carries weight that a quotation from the church fathers never could convey.

A thoughtful preacher will be alert to clip and preserve articles of this kind for timely use in his preaching. In a recent address at Convention Hall in Kansas City one of the distinguished preachers of the Middle West used two such clippings from the daily papers most effectively. A dozen proof-texts would not have carried the weight of his single quotation from a cabled report of Admiral Beatty's words. The modern preacher has a mighty weapon put into his hands now by the current press.

*e) Soldiers' letters.*—Aside from the published volumes of letters from soldiers, the newspapers are printing many others which often have the added charm and effectiveness of local reference and thus mean more to the home folks. Sometimes copies of these letters can be secured during the round of parish visiting. Others may be found in the papers. In any event, if the use of them is dictated by good taste they will drive a truth home in a fine way. Here, for example, is part of a letter that was published in the *Wichita* (Kansas) *Eagle* from Lieutenant Kenneth Cassidy:

Anyhow, you have the picture of me at mass at 6 A.M. on Easter Sunday, standing silent through a simple but impressive

service with a thousand other Irishmen, heads bared, faces earnest. Probably in that assembly there were men of as many faiths as I could count on the fingers of four hands. Yet there they were joined in a mutual brotherhood, all gathered with the single purpose of worship, and as we stood there in the early dawn, listening to the few words spoken by a man loved as few men are loved, a man who fills the very atmosphere that surrounds him with holiness—for such a man is Father Duffy, I felt a stronger kinship for my brother there than I have ever felt before. The picturesque landscape; the quaint old town; the battle-scarred ruins; the fresh, balmy spring air—and the quiet peaceful multitude—and I wondered why it was that men must be torn with such violent passions—why there must be war and ruin, rapine and bloodshed, and all the untold horrors being enacted here every day.

And then I thought of the common feeling of all gathered there and I wondered again that it was as it was, Catholic and Scientist, Protestant and nonsectarian, side by side. But, of course, the question thus raised in my mind was answered at once by the realization that the minor disputes were buried in the united desire of those gathered there to settle a dispute which for the time at least was greater and more potent than intersectarian squabbles. Then, as I continued to think along these lines, the belief seemed forced upon me that there was and is something fundamentally wrong with the very foundation of our modern ethics.

So, I wondered, Is it not natural that when the foundation of a great people, which is their religion, I believe, begins to crumble, after a while the whole structure of their civilization will fall with a cataclysmic crash? When we can begin by being brothers in the fundamental thing I believe we can begin to hope to some day attain to that mythical utopia called by some one “lasting universal peace.”

Concerning the war letters, their most successful editor and interpreter writes:

Never has any other army thus lived through its soul. And this soul reaches us from these soldiers through millions of

sublime letters which for two years have given France her spiritual bread.

May we not hope that some day in every family these letters will be carefully gathered, that they will be guarded as treasures and that they will be reverently read?

It is in this way that the interior life of our soldiers shall be made known and that the secret of heroic France shall be revealed.<sup>1</sup>

*f) Cartoons and pictures.*—One of the ways in which a preacher's mind is stimulated to discover or discuss a subject is by a picture or cartoon. Never were these to be found in such abundance and variety as they are today. The value of pictures and cartoons is twofold: Often they suggest at a glance a subject or a point for a sermon. In an instant the whole matter comes before one's mind and the subject is defined by the picture. The working out of the subject requires thought and time; but the first definition came like a flash from the picture. Then one may often describe a picture briefly or refer to a cartoon which he is quite sure that the majority of the audience has seen, and in this way make clear and vivid a point that abstract discussion would not reveal with such immediate effectiveness. The filing cabinet that contains a section for cartoons and pictures will be found to yield rich profit.

It may seem after this inventory as if we might have saved all the time and space consumed by merely saying that the sermon stuff is to be found everywhere. Well, in a nutshell, that is it. The preacher today must lay the universe under tribute. Everywhere around him lie the materials which it is his privilege to use in his sermons. It is a fascinating business. A few men

<sup>1</sup> Maurice Barrès, *The Faith of France*, p. 5. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

never understand it or yield to its charm. They wind their painful way from sermon to sermon like panting camels groaning great doctrines through the desert of dogma. To the vast majority, however, this is the day of opportunity and privilege; the world is ours; we go out to gather its treasures for the enrichment of the vital Christian message.

## CHAPTER V

### PREACHING PATRIOTISM

The American pulpit must have a clear message concerning patriotism and democracy in these days of constructive planning for the new world. We shall not attempt to make hard and fast distinctions between these two terms in the following references and discussions.

Under the stress of the War it has been possible for a kind of shrieking and parochial patriotism to get fast hold on our American minds. It seems most patriotic to say, "Our country, right or wrong." But a little honest reflection will show that this is far from the right or noble form of patriotism that will satisfy us as we try to make our kind of democracy safe for the world. That is precisely what Germany tried to do for four years of international crime. We have had enough of this. The kind of patriotism and democracy that we must seek to define through the pulpit is that which is ready to confess its liability to error and which gives every other nation its just rights in defining its own ideals.

In this spirit of international sensitiveness the pulpit will speak on patriotism with clear accent. In preparing for the message which he is to give, the preacher today will find help in at least the following lines of reading.

1. The message of the Old Testament prophets lives again in the needs of the hour. This field is familiar and it is probably like carrying coals to Newcastle to remind a preacher today of the great outlines in the



patriotic message and example of these men who spoke long ago in the name of the Lord.

With what relentless urgency they brought to the mind and conscience of the people the reality and penalty of sin, especially in its social aspects! They were not so concerned with theological transgressions as they were with the practical and deadly evils that were apparent in civic life. As David could not escape that relentless forefinger of Nathan when he said, "Thou art the man," so the wicked nation could not shut its eyes or close its ears to the figure and voice of the prophets who dared tell the people the truth about their sins.

How they comforted and assured the nation in the long times of captivity and desolation! The prophetic note is keyed to the mighty words, "Comfort ye my people . . . . speak ye home to the heart of Jerusalem." Warning and comfort mingled in the message of these seers of the Most High.

Then these Old Testament patriots were men who had practical programs for the people. Their words were not enough. They also knew what ought to be done. An academic patriotism that solves problems in the easy-chair and sets the world right from the observation car of a limited train is not profitable or reliable in the long run. Ideals have to be wrought into programs, and the constructive patriot is the man who can furnish a plan to match his dream. Therefore we turn with new satisfaction in these difficult days to the Old Testament prophets.

2. The words of Mazzini are full of fresh meaning just now. Not only for their intrinsic value, but also because the kindling messages that this fervid soul sent

to his countrymen and to all mankind accomplished so much in the interests of devoted patriotism, such a volume as *The Duties of Man and Other Essays*, published in Everyman's Library, is a vital book for the modern preacher.

The first respect in which the message of Mazzini touches the needs of the modern pulpit lies in the fact that he is intensely religious in all that he thinks and writes. "The origin of your duties is in God," he says. "The definition of your duties is found in His law. The progressive discovery and the application of His law is the task of Humanity."<sup>1</sup>

It is stimulating to read the words written in 1860 to the "Italian working class":

If you would withdraw yourselves from beneath the arbitrary rule and tyranny of men, you must adore God. And in the war which is being fought in the world between Good and Evil, you must enrol yourselves under the banner of Good and combat Evil without truce, rejecting every dubious course, every cowardly dealing, and every hypocrisy of leaders who seek to compromise between the two. On the path of the first you will have me for comrade as long as I live.<sup>2</sup>

But the significant point in the patriotic teaching of Mazzini is the way in which he makes patriotism always consist in the larger and nobler love for humanity. This is kept constantly before the reader in *The Duties of Man*. He appeals to his Italian readers in these glowing words:

You will never deny the sister nations. The life of the Country shall grow through you in beauty and in strength, free from servile fears and the hesitations of doubt, keeping as its *foundation* the people, as its *rule* the consequences of its principles logically

<sup>1</sup> *The Duties of Man*, p. 21.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 3.

deduced and energetically applied, as its *strength* the strength of all, as its *outcome* the amelioration of all, as its *end* the fulfilment of the mission which God has given it. And because you will be ready to die for Humanity, the life of your Country will be immortal.<sup>1</sup>

This is the point of view which makes Mazzini one of the most profitable masters to the preacher of the present. For, as we have noted, there is great need that the pulpit shall know how to combat the grave error that lurks in all patriotic appeal, namely, that it will be made apart from the consciousness and claim of the race and thus degenerate into a form of national group selfishness. This suffering prophet of freedom is clear-eyed at this point and he has no desire to promote a patriotism that is faithless to the larger claims of humanity as children of God.

3. We have come to the time when we appreciate more than ever before the meaning of the words and spirit of Abraham Lincoln. A united nation pays its tribute of sincerest honor to the man who embodied the cause of human freedom and national unity in the greatest civil conflict that the American people ever have experienced. He did this, however, with such firmness for the right and such sympathy for the men who fought bravely against him that in the end the representatives of both parties unite to do him honor. Lincoln becomes in these testing hours a trustworthy guide to the only right form of patriotism. His name has come to stand for the noblest type of love and loyalty to one's country. There is no longer any danger of arousing partisanship in urging his ideals upon Americans.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

The Lincoln literature is so vast that one is perplexed rather by its abundance than its lack. Among the biographies which are most interesting are those by Miss Tarbell and Mr. Rothschild. The main events in the public life of President Lincoln are so well known and the prominent traits in his character are so well defined that it is not necessary to review them at any great length in order to make effective use of them in preaching today.

The most profitable part of the Lincoln literature is the material that is to be found in the presidential speeches, addresses, and letters. There are many collections of these available; one was published in 1907 by the Current Literature Publishing Company and is inexpensive and convenient.

There are many brief addresses which express Lincoln's fundamental faith in God and in the religious meaning of human life. A reply to an address by Mrs. Gurney, in 1862, speaks of his own life and work as instruments in the hands of God "to work out his great purposes." So in every interpretation of his life, Lincoln was constantly interpreting his purpose as definitely concerned with doing the will of God.

But it is in the Second Inaugural of March 4, 1865, that the words of President Lincoln rise to their supreme height. Indeed, although the Gettysburg Address is far more widely known, the Second Inaugural is probably the greatest single short utterance of Lincoln. In spite of the fact that the concluding paragraph is so well known, it is worth while to read it often. The whole address ought to be an object of frequent reference by the preacher:

The Almighty has his own purposes. "Woe unto the world because of offenses! for it must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offense cometh." If we shall suppose that American slavery is one of those offenses which, in the providence of God, must needs come, but which, having continued through his appointed time, he now wills to remove, and that he gives to both North and South this terrible war, as the woe due to those by whom the offense came, shall we discern therein any departure from those divine attributes which the believers in a living God always ascribe to him? Fondly do we hope—fervently do we pray—that this mighty scourge of war may speedily pass away. Yet, if God wills that it continue until all the wealth piled by the bondman's two hundred and fifty years of unrequited toil shall be sunk, and until every drop of blood drawn with the lash shall be paid by another drawn with the sword as was said three thousand years ago, so still it must be said, "The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether."

With malice toward none; with charity for all; with firmness in the right as God gives us to see the right, let us strive on to finish the work we are in; to bind up the nation's wounds; to care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan—to do all which may achieve and cherish a just and lasting peace among ourselves, and with all nations.

These noble words give us certain principles that are as valid now as they were in 1865 and upon which our Christian people will do well to think as preachers bring them to their minds and hearts.

First there is the grace of the generous judgment that is not made charitable simply by obliterating fundamental distinctions, but keeps true to the command of Jesus. It was a time of bitter passions and of right arrayed against wrong; but the antagonists were praying to the same God and had the right to claim that their motives should be mutually understood. This is what Lincoln did. He understood and appreciated the South



with a degree of insight that hardly any other northern leader possessed. Time has revealed this fact.

Another point at which the words and work of Lincoln aid the preacher today is in their illustration of the unyielding confidence in a right cause. The great President knew that he was right and that his antagonists were wrong. Because this was so he knew that his cause must ultimately win. The war might continue in spite of all that he or any other man could do to prevent it; but so long as the moral order of the universe stood, the right cause must finally triumph.

In spite of the perplexing issues involved in the proposition, Lincoln held steadfastly to the truth that God is actively on the side of those who fight for the truth. He thought of himself as the agent of the moral God; he relied upon the resources that God would bring to him and to his cause. With Lincoln the words "the will of God" stood for something that had reality and power in it.

He made a clear distinction that we would do well to keep in mind when it is so easy to prate about the partnership between man and God. The famous reply made by Lincoln to a minister who said that he hoped that "the Lord was on our side," points the truth that ought to be frequently emphasized in the preaching of today. "I am not at all concerned about that," replied Mr. Lincoln, "for I know that the Lord is *always* on the side of the *right*. But it is my constant anxiety and prayer that I and this nation should be on the Lord's side."

Another fact that appears from the words and life of Lincoln is the humility and tenderness that were



born of his sense of dependence upon God. He never boasted. Saber rattling was as far from Lincoln's thought as it has been supreme in the characteristic action of the former German Kaiser and his strutting court. Lincoln walked humbly with his God and not majestically ahead of him, as the Kaiser invariably did. Cruel and terrible as war is, it is utterly impossible to think of Lincoln as sanctioning for an instant the common practice of relentless cruelty and fiendish frightfulness that marked the conduct of the Great War by Germany. The love and tenderness of Lincoln were as contrary to all this German program as evil is contrary to good.

Here also the modern preacher finds material for sermons that shall help our people when they are tempted by the report of the ravage of Belgium and the slaughter of Armenia to indulge the spirit of revenge and be burned by hate and lust for retaliation. No right-minded person can fail to flame with indignation at the authentic records of what has happened; but every Christian can hold his wrath in the leash of the spirit of Jesus and not fall into the mistake of thinking that evil can be finally overcome by evil. Retaliation was discredited long ago as the final means of conquering wrong, even if it must be indulged for a time. At last we must use the better method that Jesus employed and of which Lincoln was so conspicuous an example.

4. We can touch only briefly upon another source of material for preaching on patriotism. The days of the Civil War in the United States lie far behind us now and we can begin to understand the values in the struggle that were unseen until recently. North and South alike have come to appreciate the personal character

and the loyalty of Robert E. Lee. As a Christian and as the defender of what he thought to be the truth his work was filled with devotion and high-minded sacrifice. It is possible to turn to his life for illustrations of patriotic service and feel that the passage of time has brought a merited honor to his name.

Robert E. Lee's loyalty to Virginia and his patriotic devotion to what he conceived to be the rights of a sovereign state are the principles according to which his decision to surrender his commission as an officer of the United States Army must be understood. In the beginning of 1861 he wrote:

As an American citizen I take great pride in my country, her prosperity and institutions. But I can anticipate no greater calamity for this country than the dissolution of the Union. It would be an accumulation of all the evils we complain of, and I am willing to sacrifice everything but honor for its preservation. I hope, therefore, that all constitutional means will be exhausted before there is a resort to force. Secession is nothing but revolution. . . . Still a Union that can only be maintained by swords and bayonets, and in which strife and civil war are to take the place of brotherly love and kindness, has no charm for me. I shall mourn for my country, and for the welfare and progress of mankind. If the Union is dissolved and the government, I shall return to my native state and share the miseries of my people, and, save in defence, will draw my sword no more.<sup>1</sup>

The decision of the personal question involved an intense mental struggle. "All night nearly he paced his chamber floor alone, often seeking on his knees the guidance of the God he trusted in." When finally he decided that his supreme duty compelled him to follow the fortunes of Virginia, he acted from as genuine a

<sup>1</sup> Page, *Robert E. Lee* (1908), p. 43. Copyright by C. Scribner's Sons.

motive of patriotism as guided Lincoln. Lee saw the state; Lincoln saw the nation. Each followed his conscience as his king and yielded allegiance to imperial duty.

Were both patriots? Lee wrote:

I need not tell you that true patriotism sometimes requires men to act exactly contrary at one period to that which it does at another—and the motive which impels them—the desire to do right—is precisely the same. History is full of illustrations of this. Washington himself is an example. He fought at one time against the French under Braddock, in the service of the King of Great Britain; at another he fought with the French at Yorktown, under the orders of the Continental Congress against him. He has not been branded by the world with reproach for this; but his course has been applauded.<sup>1</sup>

This apparent inconsistency is now understood. The men of the North in this time of war appreciate as never before the intense patriotism of Robert E. Lee and give him the honor due to a great soul.

5. Another character which the preacher can turn to in preaching patriotism today is Carl Schurz. The eager devotion of this intrepid defender of the cause of freedom ought to be emphasized in order that the people may understand that there once was a Germany that produced men of this mold. Not only for what he gained from America but for what he gave her, Carl Schurz stands among the noblest and bravest of patriots.

6. Letters from the soldiers themselves form another rich source of material for sermons on patriotism. The finest collection of these is to be found in *The Faith of France*, by Maurice Barrès. Not only has he gathered

<sup>1</sup>From a letter to General Beauregard quoted in Page, *Robert E. Lee* (1908), p. 53. Copyright by C. Scribner's Sons.

these letters with ardent affection, but he has interpreted them with the insight and passion of a poet. It is our habit in America to salute France; but if one would feel the full justification for this, let him read the pages of Barrès as he marshals his witnesses to the divine inspiration of French patriotism. The following are brief quotations from letters cited by him:

Joseph Arnoult, soldier in the 44th Colonial Regiment of Infantry, wrote, just before he fell upon the field of honor: "I left [home], making the sacrifice of my life to God, praying that he might quickly accept it. I wish to die as a martyr for the salvation of my own soul and for that of France."<sup>1</sup>

This soldier had been cited in the regiment's records with these words, "He constantly volunteered for special patrol duty." These were not weak phrases, therefore; "to die as a martyr" was language full of the stern reality of the night, the danger, and the special patrol.

Pierre de Rozières was cited four times for bravery. These are his words:

The hour of universal sacrifice has sounded. The best blood is the blood which counts the most as a holocaust in the eyes of God. It may be to this that I owe my life. Paul Michaut [his cousin in the glass works at Baccarat] was one of the victims on whose account God will give us victory. If I am to serve, and to serve well in the future, I have the firm conviction that I shall be spared. But if my life is not to respond to the ideal I have ever before me, then God in His goodness will take me at the moment when I have reached the extreme of my utility. Why should I be anxious? It is evident that the very best Frenchmen will be tested by infinite suffering; and as I am not one of the best, it is certain that I shall not be called upon to suffer the most.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith of France*, p. 45. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 136.

On the eve of a great offensive in Champagne, where he was killed on October 6, 1915, Maurice Dieterlin sent this last message to his family:

I have spent the most beautiful day of my existence. I regret nothing and I am as happy as a king. I am glad to forfeit my life in order that my country may be delivered. Say to our friends that I am going to victory with a smile on my lips, rejoicing more than have all the stoics and all the martyrs throughout the ages. We are only one moment in eternal France. France must live—France shall live.

Prepare your most beautiful raiments. Treasure your smiles to do honor to the conquerors in this great war. We may not be amongst them—others will be there in our stead. You shall not weep. You shall not wear mourning for us, because we die with a smile on our lips and with a superhuman joy in our hearts. Long live France! Long live France!<sup>1</sup>

Among the most courageous of these young idealists have been Roman Catholic priests and Protestant ministers. It was one of the former, Father de Gironde, who is reported as saying shortly before his death at Ypres, in December, 1914:

To die young, to die a priest, a soldier, while attacking, while advancing, in the full performance of one's sacerdotal privileges, or perhaps giving absolution; to shed my blood for the Church, for France, for my friends, for all whose hearts are filled with the same ideal as my own, and for others who know the joy of belief. Ah, how beautiful this is!<sup>2</sup>

Only one more quotation may be given. It reveals the final emotions of the soldiers who have won the victory in the Great War:

Now, mother, dearest to me among all these admirable French mothers, I would like to see thee the most French of them

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

all. Say to thyself that no life whatsoever, not even that of thine own son, is anything in comparison with the salvation of the country.<sup>1</sup>

These young men, the majority of them in the early twenties, many of them educated in the best schools of France, gave their lives for France without a moment's hesitation. It is not a wonder that this action has been interpreted by both laymen and clericals as essentially religious.

The democratic ideals of America have been in the glowing process of shaping ever since the Great War began. The literature that has appeared on the subject is bewildering in its amount and method of discussion. Undoubtedly President Wilson himself is the spokesman on this high theme to which the minister will be most inclined to listen, irrespective of his political party preferences. Furthermore the large outline of the President's ideal is clear enough from the propositions which he has laid down in his addresses and papers. Democracy as we conceive it in America rests in the right of the people to govern themselves, with due regard for the rights of other free nations. The democratic idea according to President Wilson conforms to the similar standards in the minds of Mazzini and Lincoln and Lee. The League of Nations which must guarantee the peace and welfare of the world in the future cannot be erected on the basis of any especial divine or human rights possessed by any one people in disregard for the equally divine and human rights of others.

When it comes to preaching this conception of democracy, it is found to consist with the ideal of the Kingdom

<sup>1</sup> *A Soldier Unafraid*, p. 52. Copyright by Little, Brown & Co., publishers.



of God as it is defined in the New Testament. Jesus himself is the great Christian champion of democracy. These ideals are not something which have been discovered by any school of political economists. They are simply the gospel, simply the "simple" gospel, applied in the government of the individual, the nation, and the race as a whole. The preacher finds himself instantly and happily at home here, for he is dealing with the essential Christian message as it was given in the beginning and has persisted in spite of eclipse and apparent total loss at times.

The immediate duty of the American minister as he preaches on patriotism and democracy is to exalt the worth of true loyalty to one's country, to insist that this shall be maintained in right relations to international consciousness and responsibility, and to warn the people faithfully against the peril of becoming *Prussianized* while we seek completely to defeat *Prussianism*. This last point is such a clear and urgent duty that we dwell upon it now for the sake of added emphasis. Our most thoughtful preachers have seen the danger and have been faithful in proclaiming the peril and in suggesting practical ways in which to meet it. Robert E. Speer says:

If . . . we are justified in this one more war to stop war, it does not follow that we are free to yield to the spirit that we set out to destroy. Precisely otherwise. If this view now allows and warrants war, it also warns and cautions and sobers us. It bids us be rid of our prejudice and passion, to chant no hymns of hate, to keep our aims and our principles free from selfishness and from any national interest which is not also the interest of all to refrain from doing in retaliation and in war the very things we condemn in others, to avoid Prussianism in our national life in

the effort to crush Prussianism, to guard against the moral uncleanness which has characterized past wars as against pestilence, to magnify the great constructive and humane services for which humanity calls in every such time of tragedy, to love and pray for our enemies, to realize that the task set for us is not to be discharged in a year or five years, not by money and ships and guns, but by life, that it is a war to the death against all that makes war possible. We have to replace an order of selfishness and wrong and division with an order of brotherhood and righteousness and unity. Whatever stands in the way of that new order in our nation or in our hearts is an ally of the ideals and spirit against which we contend. To tolerate or to conceal behind our armies the policies, the prejudices, or the passions which are before them is disloyalty. To try to make our own hearts pure and our own hands clean so that we may be worthy of being used to achieve victory and peace is loyalty, and it is the only kind of loyalty that will stand the strain that we must now prepare ourselves to meet.<sup>1</sup>

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON PATRIOTISM

### SUGGESTION I

"Why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?" (Neh. 2:3).

### AN OLD-TIME PATRIOT

An outline study of Nehemiah, the patriot. The following points are indicated in the text and are pertinent to modern conditions:

- I. Loyal to native land in exile and prosperity (1:2).
- II. Recognizing dependence on God (1:5-11; 5:15).
- III. Forming practical plans for patriotic work (2:7, 8).
- IV. Careful survey preceding service (2:13-16).
- V. Detailed organization under leadership (4:16-20).
- VI. Governor without graft (5:14-18).

<sup>1</sup> *The Christian Man, the Church and the War*, pp. 30, 31. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

SUGGESTION 2

"Only thou shalt not bring my son thither again" (Gen. 24:6-8).

AMERICANIZED

In order to work out a new destiny in a new land, Isaac must remain in Canaan and not return to his father's early home. This indicates three points:

- I. The gift of the old land to the new.
- II. The welcome of the new land to the old.
- III. The union of old and new in the future state.

SUGGESTION 3

"I will not take a thread nor a shoe-latchet nor aught that is thine, lest thou shouldest say, I have made Abram rich" (Gen. 14:23).

LEADERS WITH CLEAN HANDS

- I. The place and power of leaders in a democracy.
- II. The peril of graft and gain.
- III. The true leader a man with clean hands.

SUGGESTION 4

"And my wrath, it upheld me" (Isa. 63:5).

THE STRENGTHENING GRACE OF A GREAT PASSION

The folly and failure of neutrality and indifference when justice and truth are in danger. The necessity of great, compelling ideals; of hatred for evil and love for the truth. Therefore these points:

- I. Defining a nation's ideals and loyalties.
- II. The steadying power of a great ideal passionately defended.
- III. The final victory of a great passion for truth and justice.

SUGGESTION 5

"Only behave as citizens worthily of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).

#### RELIGION AND CITIZENSHIP

The margin correctly reproduces the figure involved in the Greek verb. This suggests:

- I. Religion is a civic power: Christianity has a direct reference to the state.
- II. Civic life needs religion to cleanse and ennoble it.
- III. Religion and civic duty must co-operate constantly in a world re-made through war.

#### SUGGESTION 6

"Oh, my lord, if Jehovah is with us, why then is all this befallen us?"

"And Jehovah said, Go in this thy might, and save Israel" (Judg. 6:13, 14).

#### HOPE IN DARK DAYS

Gideon, beating out wheat in the wine press to deceive the Midianites, was in despair.

- I. The mood of despair. Its cause and curse and cure.
- II. The strength of God in a national crisis.
- III. The mission of the patriot.

#### SUGGESTION 7

"By the watercourses of Reuben  
There were great resolves of heart.  
Why satest thou among the sheepfolds  
To hear the pipings for the flocks?  
At the watercourses of Reuben  
There were great searchings of heart"

(Judg. 5:15, 16).

#### THE CALL OF THE CRISIS

- I. The pipings for the flocks. Security; comfort; safety. Industry; home life; peace.
- II. The searchings of heart. Justice violated; truth defied; mercy set at naught. Chivalry; loyalty; humanity; religion.
- III. The patriot's response. The flocks exchanged for the camp.

SUGGESTION 8

"Then I said, Here am I; send me" (Isa. 6:8).

VOLUNTEERS

- I. The call is personal.
- II. The call is specific.
- III. The call is urgent.
- IV. The call involves sacrifice.
- V. The call ennobles the volunteer.

SUGGESTION 9

"That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world" (Phil. 2:15).

IDEAL CITIZENS

- I. Negatively: free from wrongdoing.
- II. In the midst of life and not isolated from it.
- III. Positively: like the light, energetic and constant in the creation and support of life.

SUGGESTION 10

"Then render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's" (Luke 20:25).

PATRIOTIC OBLIGATION AND RELIGIOUS LOYALTY

- I. Our country rightly claims our service.
- II. Our God also rightly claims our service.
- III. Neither conflicts with the other.
- IV. One complements the other and both together make life sane and good.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE WORTH OF HUMANITY

Here is a paradox: At the very moment when human life was being extinguished with such reckless prodigality, the worth of the human soul was being revealed in all its divine and eternal value. The very experiences which seemed to obliterate the worth of the individual set such value upon human life as never had appeared before.

Of all the doctrines of religion that practically influence the preacher none has a more radical meaning than his conception of human nature, what it is and what it is worth. If man is of little value and his destruction is an unimportant matter, the preacher has no urgency to impel him to plead for the salvation of the soul. Nor has he any compelling sense of the meaning of sin. For all the significance of sin depends upon the value of that which is destroyed by it. To spill ink over a mop rag involves no disaster; to dash it across a piece of old lace means dire loss. It is the worth of that which is injured which determines the character of the force which works the injury. Thus no preacher ever can speak with conviction concerning the fundamental truths of religion unless he has first of all a clear idea of the nature of man and the worth of human life.

Probably there is no more conspicuous example of this principle than Phillips Brooks. The one ruling idea in his mind was the worth of life and the majesty of human nature. If one grasps the practical meaning of



the simple sentence, "all men are the children of God," the master-motive of the great preacher's work is immediately clear. To him humanity seemed infinitely precious. Jesus came into a human experience from the heart of the Father God in order that he might show us how noble and good it was to live as the Father would have us. Phillips Brooks made every appeal to what he conceived to be the real person, the divine image in the human.

However we may regard the fundamental theology of this position, it is undoubtedly true that it gives the preacher a tremendous faith and mighty appeal. If humanity is worth so much to God we must do all we can to bring it to self-expression; we must fight with all the forces at our command the influences that put it in peril at any point. Therefore let us see what the Great War has been saying concerning the worth of human life. Has it made it cheap or has it made it great?

First of all it is apparent that the War has subjected men to such tests as have revealed their innate character. We were drifting along quite easily and there were no searching situations to call for great decisions. Then the challenge came. Donald Hankey has shown what this involved in the following words:

In the trenches the real white man finally and conclusively comes to his own. The worm, no matter how exalted his rank, automatically ceases to count. The explanation of this phenomenon is very simple. In the moment of crisis the white man is always on the spot, while the worm is always in his dug-out.<sup>1</sup>

This soldiers' use of the term "white man" is exceedingly suggestive, for it comes from the trenches where

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 1, p. 32. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

men with black skins are fighting side by side with Caucasians, and the words used here are not ethnological. They refer to the soul and not to the complexion. They describe character and conduct.

At another time Hankey writes:

I have been discovering human goodness. . . . And oh, I have found it! In Bermondsey, in the stinking hold of the Zieten, in the wide, thirsty desert of Western Australia, and in the ranks of the Seventh Battalion of the Rifle Brigade. I enlisted very largely to find out how far I really believed in the brotherhood of man when it comes to the point—and I do believe in it more and more.<sup>1</sup>

Thus out of the blood and dirt and death of the trenches came the revelation of new worth in the humanity crowded together there under most abnormal circumstances for the purposes of fratricidal war.

Hankey is not the only witness on this point. In order that the evidence may be still more convincing we cite the following. Sherwood Eddy, after visiting the Western Front, wrote:

The war, like a great searchlight thrown across our individual and social lives, has revealed men and nations to themselves. . . . It has shown us the real stuff of which men are made.<sup>2</sup>

Thomas Tiplady, whose service as a chaplain has issued in the production of two of the most illuminating books of the War, interpreting with wonderful sensitiveness and skill the spirit of the British army, wrote:

When one remembers that the prodigies of valour daily seen on the Front are performed by just ordinary men, such as we used to

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 2, p. 29. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *With Our Soldiers in France*, p. 129. Association Press,

see on football grounds, or in city offices, workshops, and churches, a new faith in humanity and its future is begotten.<sup>1</sup>

There is another witness, whose words are so convincing and whose spirit is so full of manly charm that his testimony becomes the most significant of all. Coningsby Dawson was already master of an assured literary career in America when the War called him to volunteer in Canada for service overseas. His father writes concerning his spirit, revealed in his published letters:

Hating the brutalities of war, clearly perceiving the wide range of its cruelties, yet the heart of the writer is never hardened by its daily commerce with death; it is purified by pity and terror, by heroism and sacrifice, until the whole nature seems fresh annealed into a finer strength.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Dawson also describes the soldiers in general:

They know themselves re-born in soul, and are dimly aware that the world is travailing toward new birth with them. They are still very human, men who end their letters with a row of crosses which stand for kisses. They are not dehumanized by war; the kindness and tenderness of their natures are unspoiled by all their daily traffic in horror. But they have won their souls; and when the days of peace return these men will take with them to the civilian life a tonic strength and nobleness which will arrest and extirpate the decadence of society with the saving salt of valor and of faith.<sup>3</sup>

These are interpretations, however, and are far less significant than the words of the writer himself, written down in letters that quite unconsciously and therefore all the more accurately reveal the changes wrought by the War in his own spiritual temper.

<sup>1</sup> *The Cross at the Front*, p. 146. Fleming H. Revell Co.

<sup>2</sup> Rev. W. J. Dawson, Introduction to Coningsby Dawson, *Carry On*, p. 8. Copyright by John Lane Co.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 17.

It is difficult to maintain proper reserve in the desire to quote from these revealing pages. Only the following out of many paragraphs equally expressive are transcribed:

Things are growing deeper with me in all sorts of ways. Family affections stand out so desirably and vivid, like meadows green after rain. And religion means more. The love of a few dear human people and the love of the divine people out of sight, are all that one has to lean on in the graver hours of life. I hope I come back again—I very much hope I come back again; there are so many finer things that I could do with the rest of my days—bigger things. But if by any chance I should cross the seas to stay, you'll know that that also will be right and as big as anything that I could do with life, and something that you'll be able to be just as proud about as if I had lived to fulfil all your other dear hopes for me. . . . I've become a little child again in God's hands, with full confidence in his love and wisdom, and a growing trust that whatever He decides for me will be best and kindest.<sup>1</sup>

Once more Mr. Dawson writes:

This war is a prolonged moment of exultation for most of us—we are redeeming ourselves in our own eyes. To lay down one's life for one's friend once seemed impossible. All that is altered. We lay down our lives that the future generations may be good and kind, and so we can contemplate oblivion with quiet eyes.<sup>2</sup>

One more quotation from these letters contains a vivid reference which throws into clear relief the experience of meeting the War's most urgent stress:

You know how I used to wonder what I'd do under such circumstances [shell fire]. Well, I laughed. All I could think of was the sleek people walking down Fifth Avenue, and the equally sleek crowds taking tea at the Waldorf.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Rev. W. J. Dawson, Introduction to Coningsby Dawson, *Carry on*, p. 27. Copyright by John Lane Co.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

The biting irony of this last reference is self-evident. In contrast with the realities and nobilities of the trenches the small talk and complaisant satisfactions of the Waldorf tea-sippers appear as contemptible as they really are. Surely the soul does not come into the heritage of its ultimate nobleness in such places. The trenches have called it into being.

From these more elaborate pieces of literature let us turn to the newspapers to see what sort of stuff the Great War has shown in our homes and villages. On May 14, 1918, Lieutenant Harry D. Preston, a Chicago aviator in the Canadian service, lost his life in combat with German planes. When the news reached his mother this is what she said: "He died for the cause. I shall continue to live for it. Tomorrow I shall go about my Red Cross work as usual."

What a glorious spirit! Let no one think that it did not go along with the keenest suffering and intensest sense of loss. But it is the soul triumphant. The editorial writer in a Chicago paper remarked concerning the simple, brave words: "It is the spirit of thousands, hundreds of thousands, of aching hearts in Europe. They have not grudged the great price."

There is a most courageous and heroic incident narrated in the *Red Cross Magazine* for August, 1918. An Italian woman whose son, Italo, had been killed sent a letter to an officer thanking him for his kindness. She could not write herself, and the letter was composed by her grandson. The last paragraph ran thus:

Was it you, signor Captain, who gave my name to those gentlemen who came to bring me money because Italo was dead? It was not from pride, not to mortify anyone, but I could not take

it. You see, for me to take that money would be like having sold my son. I have *given* my son.

The person who can read that with no choke in the throat and with dry eyes has lost something which is more precious than anything else on earth. The editor put this caption to the incident: "She Could Not Write, But What a Soul!"

How, then, are we to preach regarding humanity? The doctrines of total depravity and original sin are in the realm of theology; but they have a mighty warrant behind them in the conscious experience of men who struggle with sin. For the preacher, however, these are not the final facts. Sin becomes dreadful because it ruins man, who is intrinsically so noble. As we shall see later, we are winning a new conception of sin, more vivid and compelling than any that has ever guided the preacher; but the background for this is a new consciousness of the worth of humanity to God and to itself. Out of this idea grows our appeal for a Savior and for the new life in Christ. We begin with this truth; we do not stop there. But as we master the new ideal of human worth we discover fresh joy and power in the Christian message.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON THE WORTH OF HUMANITY

### SUGGESTION I

"Yet now is our flesh as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought into bondage already: neither is it in our power to help it; for other men have our fields and our vineyards" (Neh. 5:5).



THE WORTH OF A MAN

The circumstances: Economic slavery. Nehemiah's anger.

- I. Master and servant, usurer and debtor, are one.
  - a) Same physical bodies.
  - b) Same common hopes and struggles.
  - c) Same death.
- II. Economic subjection makes slaves.
  - a) No ambition.
  - b) No progress possible.
  - c) Greater loss constantly "to him that hath not."
- III. This bondage must be broken. Restoration imperative (vs. 11).
  - a) First, the means of life.
  - b) Then the people would *restore themselves*.

SUGGESTION 2

"And God said, Let us make man in our image" (Gen. 1:27).

THE MAJESTY OF MAN

What is it to "bear the image of the heavenly"?

- I. Our mental life. We are able to think God's thoughts after him. The quest of knowledge is the effort to reach God's mind.
- II. Our moral life. We discover the right and seek it in correspondence with the moral will of God. The only reason why we should be holy is because God is holy.
- III. Our spiritual life. We yearn for the perfect and seek it through struggle and pain. Our spiritual goal is to be like God, to see him as he is.

SUGGESTION 3

"Know ye not that ye are a temple of God, and that the spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man destroyeth the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, and such are ye" (I Cor. 3:16, 17).

## GOD'S TEMPLE IS MAN

Treat this proposition according to the analogy of a temple, for example:

- I. The place of the temple in the community.
- II. The preservation of the temple.
- III. The use of the temple.
- IV. The Deity in the temple.

## SUGGESTION 4

"And a man shall be as a hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest, as streams of water in a dry place, as the shade of a great rock in a weary land" (Isa. 32:2).

## "HOW GOOD IS MAN'S LIFE"

This text has been handled with a degree of insight and comprehensiveness which leaves nothing more to be said by George Adam Smith, *Isaiah* (I, 251-57). His outline is as follows:

- I. A philosophy of history.
- II. A great gospel.
- III. A great ideal and duty.

## SUGGESTION 5

Exposition of Luke 15:11-32.

## THE LOST BOY

The parable of the Prodigal Son is a most appropriate subject for preaching today. It was one of the great factors in the pulpit ministry of Phillips Brooks. This lost lad was worth so much! He was still the father's son, however he was debauching and despising his birthright in the far country. And when he really discovered his true self he saw that he was heart-hungry for home. So many lads are away from home now and in places of peril that the familiar parable is more vital in the pulpit than ever before. Handle it with the sense of the worth of the lost boy in the forefront of your thinking.

SUGGESTION 6

"What is man, that thou art mindful of him ?

For thou hast made him but little lower than God" (Ps. 8:4, 5).

EXALTED LOWLINESS

- I. The majestic heavens.
- II. The mighty God.
- III. Exalted man. His power over nature; his moral insight; his quest of ideal ends; his immortal destiny.

SUGGESTION 7

"How much then is a man of more value than a sheep?"  
(Matt. 12:12).

MARKET VALUES

Introduction. Need of a new scale of values.

- I. How men regard sheep.
- II. How men regard men.
- III. How God regards sheep and men.

SUGGESTION 8

"The sword of Jehovah and of Gideon" (Judg. 7:20).

A TWO-HANDED SWORD

- I. God and man worked together: there was one sword for both.
- II. Thus God's will was done through human means.
- III. Thus human hands were strengthened by divine aid.  
Use as an illustration  
    "If my hand slacked  
I should rob God . . . .  
He could not make Antonio Stradivari's violins  
Without Antonio."

## CHAPTER VII

### "THE EVERLASTING REALITY OF RELIGION"

This significant phrase was used by John Fiske<sup>1</sup> to denote that indelible faculty of the human soul which, laying hold upon God, makes religion an integral and potent factor in human life. It is the same truth that Augustine recognized in his matchless sentence,<sup>2</sup> "Thou hast made us, O God, for thyself, and our souls are not at rest until they rest in thee."

Religion in its elementary and durable character, religion as personal relationship between the soul and God realized in social morality as well as in ritual and adoration, has been affirmed and vitalized in camp, and trench, and fleet, and hospital as never before. To recognize and affirm this is the preacher's opportunity in this age of constructive endeavor. Preaching now may concern itself anew with the reality and power of religion.

Certain fundamental distinctions ought to be made clear, however. *Religion*, the *Kingdom of God*, *Christianity*, and the *church* are not identical terms. They are often used as if they were equivalents. Let us make them distinct in our thinking and preaching.

Religion is the broadest term and includes the relation between the soul and Deity, together with all the results in practical life that flow from it. This may come

<sup>1</sup> *Through Nature to God*, pp. 133-86.

<sup>2</sup> *Confessions*, i. 1.

to expression in organized forms or become institutionalized in a religion, like Judaism or Christianity. We believe that the most complete expression of religion is Christianity.

The Kingdom of God is the ideal which Jesus announced as good news and with which his teaching was concerned. It is a body of truth rather than an institution, yet it lies with creative power behind the forms of Christianity. We are returning to this ideal with new insistence, and it will doubtless function with fresh power in the re-making of the world through Christian forces.

Christianity is a comprehensive term embracing all the forms in which the ideal of the Kingdom of God is expressed. The doctrines, the deeds, the worship, the ethics, the programs of the Christian religion, are embraced here. *Christianity* and the *Christian religion* may fairly be used as synonyms.

The Christian church is more concrete and specific. It may be regarded in many aspects. Most concisely it consists of the fellowship of all those whose master-motives are identical with those of Jesus Christ. It is the "organism of Christ," that is, it is the union in spirit of all those who are in vital contact with the living Christ. Objectively this includes the institutions of Christianity; subjectively it is an invisible fellowship, a union in spiritual endeavor.

These four concepts are distinct enough for all practical purposes and should be kept clear in our thinking and speaking. The following principles and suggestions are arranged under the heads just enumerated.

a) *Religion*.—What have the soldiers been thinking and saying about the reality and power of religion in the war? What testimony is forthcoming from the religious workers among the soldiers and sailors? There are two main lines of testimony: the first comes from the letters of soldiers, the second is contained in the judgments of the chaplains.

The editor of the significant volume *Faith or Fear?* assures us that the Great War has brought religion into the actual life of the men with a new power and reality. He says:

There never surely was a time when a deeper interest was being taken in religion, when men were seeking more eagerly for that sure foothold among the changes and chances of this mortal life which a vital religion alone can give. . . . The one subject which really interests every thoughtful person is religion."<sup>1</sup>

The possibility of talking about religion without a sense of unnaturalness or intrusion is greater than it was four years ago. One hears more frank and fair-minded talk on this subject in the Pullman cars than was the case before the war. This is not due to any sudden interest in any particular form of religious activity. It results from the influence of the world-situation upon the minds of men.

This has been put concretely by Professor D. S. Cairns, as follows:

One cannot help noting a new depth and earnestness in men's minds. The presence of death, sorrow, and pain, the sense of being in the grasp of forces far too great for man to control, is awakening the primitive religious sense in man. The feeling of his own helplessness is making him call out for God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Editor's Preface, p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 41. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.



We turn instinctively to H. G. Wells at this point. His confidence in what he calls the "renascent religion"<sup>1</sup> of today is so strong that it carries weight even beyond the convincing force of his argument. Mr. Wells has all the joy of a crusader as he declares for the day of religious awakening into which we have come. His readers feel the quiver of exultation in his words, as, for example:

There is not a nation nor a city in the globe where men are not being urged at this moment by the spirit of God in them toward the discovery of God. This is not an age of despair but an age of hope in Asia as in all the world besides.<sup>2</sup>

But it is more illuminating to turn to those who have had actual experience at the Front with the soldiers. In general, chaplains and leaders of Young Men's Christian Associations agree that there was a deep and genuine religion pervasive among the soldiers. It may not have been formal, it may not have been distinctively Christian, so far as it came to definition, but by every right use of the word it was real and tangible religion.

We discover varying degrees of confidence in the reports. Donald Hankey, in his well-known chapter "The Religion of the Inarticulate," is somewhat more clear and decided in judgment than is Sherwood Eddy, who says:

Most of them [the soldiers] believe in God, although they do not know Him in a personal way. They believe in religion, but have not made it vital and dominant in their lives. . . . [God] is looked upon, however, not as one whom they are to seek first, but rather as a last resort; not as a present Father and constant Friend, but as One to whom they can turn in time of need.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *God the Invisible King*, pp. 3-5. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 160.

<sup>3</sup> *With Our Soldiers in France*, p. 144. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

The letters of the men themselves are naturally reserved, but they bear witness to the religious purpose and passion of their writers more fully than would perhaps be expected at first thought. The following are a few among the many expressions of religious feeling which have appeared in the published letters of soldiers. Many more might be cited, but these are representative:

A brilliant young officer in a far-away training camp recently wrote home, out of his soul's struggle, in view of the horrible thing war is to a fine nature: "I think I'm more religious since I've been here, more really religious, than ever before. In the first place, I've been thinking a good deal about it. And then, I suppose, I'm living a more normal life in a way. No use talking, being busy outdoors brings a man closer to his Maker. And then, presumptuous as it may seem, I feel as though I begin to see a little way into the inscrutability of this war and the great power of God keeping watch above his own."<sup>1</sup>

In the brief introduction to a selection from the letters of Captain André Cornet-Auquier the editor says:

Also like so many of the French soldiers, and contrary to popular belief, this young French captain is deeply religious. His faith is unwavering, and he says with him prayer is a "constant state." But if any one thinks his piety interferes with his gaiety, he is mistaken. "How I make them laugh," he writes in one letter. He quotes the rules and regulations for the Grand Hotel of the Trenches, how they must not leave the gas burning, nor carry off the sandbags, nor lean out of the windows, nor, especially, have anything to do with the rival concern over the way.<sup>2</sup>

Among the men whose experiences have been fascinating by virtue of their daring and endurance is

<sup>1</sup> Knight, *War-Time "Over Here,"* p. 48. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *The Good Soldier* (1918), p. 49.

Lieutenant Pat O'Brien. In an article from his pen occurs the following bit of interesting testimony:

People ask me what I have got out of the war; what, if anything, I have gained from all the experiences I went through. I hadn't analyzed it at first, but now I think I know. All of us who have been over there have come back with a more serious outlook on life than we used to have. I was what I suppose you would call an individualist—and I was the individual! I thought chiefly of *my* fun, *my* happiness, *my* pleasures.

But I've learned that life is something more than a happy-go-lucky adventure. Perhaps going through some hardships of my own has made me more sensitive to suffering in others. I know what it is to be hungry, to be lonely, to be in physical pain. Seeing men's lives snuffed out in a moment can't help affecting your own attitude toward life and death.

The boys who have been over there have a new feeling about religion, even though they may not talk much about it. I know I see fellows going to church now who, I am certain, never used to go there. Someone asked me the other day if I ever thought of praying when I was in a fight in the air. Yes, I did! It is so instinctive that it seems to me pretty good proof that there is a Supreme Being to whom we naturally turn.<sup>1</sup>

Along with these letters and comments may be placed numerous editorials, especially in the daily press, which is quick to discover and evaluate the significant movements of thought and action throughout the world. A signed editorial by William A. McKeever, January 21, 1918, is typical. The name of the paper is unfortunately cut away from the clipping:

The great war is laying bare the real heart of humanity and revealing in a startling manner the fact that all the great elemental things of human nature are the common property of every race and tribe under the sun. So with religion.

<sup>1</sup> *American Magazine*, June, 1918.

The story keeps coming to us from the more reliable quarters that under the desperation of fighting and dying together in the trenches men of all creeds and no creed at all cry out to God in the same simple and primitive ways; that at this particular time creeds and ceremonials pale into insignificance, while Jew and Gentile, Greek and Hindu, find a new and satisfying bond of fellowship with their Maker and with one another.

"When the millions of battle-scarred troops come back from the trenches they are going to have their own way about many of the great human problems which are being tested out for the first time through blood and agony," says a well-known war correspondent. "I never before understood the meaning of such words as comradeship and worship till I saw the boys dying together in the trenches. A new era of religion is coming which will not have less of God in it, but it will contain far more of the element of human fellowship and patient tolerance than has ever been known on the earth."

Thus we have a suggestion of the approaching task of training the young religiously. First, there will appear the necessity of inculcating religion, not as merely a means of salvation, but in response to a great fundamental human need. Second, there will be a growing indifference with what church or what creed the young individual becomes affiliated. One will choose his church much as he now is expected to select his vocation, in answer to the call from within and the convenience from without. Third, there will arise the necessity of bridging over from the old to the new, of teaching the young generation to forget the intolerance which has been a long-standing habit of their elders.

Finally, not a person's badge of church membership, or profession of faith, but the genuineness of his daily life—this is what we are to point out to our children as evidence of true religion.

The simple and palpable tests will include such characteristics as universal human sympathies, a desire for common fellowship, a consciousness to put away the "sins of the flesh" by whatever rule there may be invoked, a deep humility and resignation in the face of life's great tragedies, a progressive tendency to look for the Image of the Divine in the character of innocent childhood, and a supreme joy in assisting little ones to grow into His full Heavenly Likeness.

No, do not be alarmed. This trench religion will not serve to break down the churches, but only to unify, to humanize, and more completely to spiritualize them.

When one proceeds to analyze these reports and estimates, religion appears in at least three aspects clarified by the War and potent in an age of reconstruction.

Real religion is seen to be a greater fact and force than ever before. It is not an accidental matter; it is the chief concern of life. A small and narrow age may not have required a great religion; but this world of titanic energies, international conflicts, and massed movements, such as never have been known before, calls for a religion that shall be vast enough to embrace them all. As Dr. Harry E. Fosdick says:

As one thinks of the world today, shaken in an earthquake that brings clattering down about our ears the dearest dreams our hearts have cherished, it does seem that religion should grow great to meet her crisis and opportunity and, casting aside the littleness that in calmer days might find excuse, ought to speak great words about God and the Kingdom, lest men's hearts turn to water in them and their strength be gone.<sup>1</sup>

Then we are aware of the reality of religion. It is not something artificial or assumed, not something remote from life, but part and parcel of its very substance. Religion has come down from the clouds to dwell among men; it is the preacher's new task to insist that it remain there. Just as the physical powers have a real world to which they correspond and in the constant relationship to which the physical life consists, so the spiritual faculties find their satisfaction in connection with actual spiritual realities. The soul is as much a

<sup>1</sup> *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 90. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

part of personality as are the hands or the feet, and the engagements of religion are as real and necessary as is the provision of food or the laying of brick walls. *The preacher is talking about realities.* Never let that truth be lost from the minister's working consciousness.

A third fact apparent in this testimony from the War is the actual power of real religion to bear men up and make them brave and patient. Religion actually works. It makes a man courageous and cheerful and loyal. Subjected pitilessly to the pragmatic test, religion is seen to get results in personal character and in group relationships. Instead of religion being something held in reserve by which to die, it is seen to be something amply employed by which to live. There is strength in it. It has not failed in the critical hours.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON RELIGION

The first point to be considered is the universal and inevitable necessity for a religion of some kind on the part of every individual and race. This cannot be avoided; it is wrought into the very constitution of man. This appears often in the Bible.

##### SUGGESTION I

"When thou saidst, Seek ye my face; my heart said unto thee,  
Thy face, Jehovah, will I seek" (Ps. 27:8).

##### THE SOUL'S ANSWER TO GOD

Religion is the reaction of the soul to the impulse of God. This truth insures the naturalness and the permanence of religion. Two lines of discussion are opened by the text:

- I. How has God spoken?
- II. How can we answer?



SUGGESTION 2

"The work of the law written in their hearts" (Rom. 2:15).

AN INDELIBLE RELIGION

Use the testimony of the soldiers, an example of which is the evidence of Lieutenant Pat O'Brien, to show how man is "incurably religious." He turns to God instinctively in any time of trial, like the homing bees.

SUGGESTION 3

"I found also an altar with this inscription, TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. What therefore ye worship in ignorance, this I set forth unto you" (Acts 17:23).

A GREAT DISCOVERY

Note the meaning of "very religious" in verse 22. In order that there might be no deity overlooked someone had erected an altar to a god without a name.

This religious background permits the revelation of God in Christ. The "Unknown God" may be known as the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. This gives opportunity for a straight gospel message.

Having shown that religion is essential and vital to all men, the modern pulpit must present the outline of a real and efficient faith. The Old Testament is rich in material. The following are examples:

SUGGESTION 4

"And now, Israel, what doth Jehovah thy God require of thee, but to fear Jehovah thy God, to walk in all his ways, and to love him, and to serve Jehovah thy God with all thy heart and with all thy soul" (Deut. 10:12).

THE OUTLINE OF A TRUE FAITH

- I. Reverence.
- II. Obedience.
- III. Love.
- IV. Service.

## SUGGESTION 5

"He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with thy God?" (Mic. 6:8).

## REAL RELIGION

Set out the historical situation revealed by the text:

- I. The use of ceremonies and sacrifices to express religion; their failure.
- II. The necessity of justice, love, and a reverent life.

The danger of trying adequately to express religion in forms and ceremonies alone, or to comprehend it in doctrines and institutions, ought to be shown clearly in modern preaching.

## SUGGESTION 6

"And he called it Nehushtan" (II Kings 18:4).

## IMAGE-BREAKING

Compare Num. 21:8, 9. As the years passed this symbol, which had once stood for the love and power of God shown to the people in a time of distress, had grown to be an object of base and formal idolatry. The symbol had usurped the place of that which it represented. Therefore the time came when a man with power and discernment must break it in pieces and call it what it truly was, "a piece of brass." Such times of fearless, uncompromising dealing with religious situations call for wise, courageous leaders.

## SUGGESTION 7

"For thou delightest not in sacrifice; else would I give it:  
Thou hast no pleasure in burnt-offering.  
The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit:  
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise"  
(Ps. 51:16, 17).

THE SACRIFICE THAT GOD HONORS

The value of this suggestion depends upon the interpretation of "broken spirit." This does not mean a weak or spiritless life. A contrite heart or a broken spirit means a soul from which all pride and boasting have been taken away, and which is ready to be used in any service which will honor God. It is like the life "already being poured out as a drink-offering," concerning which the writer could say confidently, "I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith" (II Tim. 4:6, 7).

SUGGESTION 8

"But so did not I, because of the fear of God" (Neh. 5:15).

THE FAITH THAT TRANSFORMS

Here is a man who rose above the practice of his time. He gives the reason for his success: his religion appeared in the form of power.

- I. The prevalence of graft.
- II. The practice of Nehemiah.
- III. Grounds for his practice: civic sympathy (vs. 19); personal religion (vs. 15).

SUGGESTION 9

"And he did that which was evil, because he set not his heart to seek Jehovah" (II Chron. 12:14).

"And as long as he sought Jehovah, God made him to prosper" (II Chron. 26:5).

RELIGION AND CONDUCT

Here are two brief records of the power of religion to create character and assure success. In each case religion "works." There is intimate relationship between a man's relation to God and the practical life of every day.

b) *The Kingdom of God.*—We have seen that the reality and power of religion have been brought into

new clearness by the Great War. Another point to be emphasized is the new meaning that is being discovered in the great ideal of the Kingdom of God as Jesus taught it and as it has been slowly growing into the consciousness of the Christian people. The 'modern minister must study again the broad outlines of the Kingdom and be ready to present them to an age that will demand a positive program for the social realization of whatever religion is approved as best. It has been put in this way in a volume of recent sermons:

For all the nations, and not the least our own, we have to ask what is the great antagonistic force which can hold the field against evil, enduring it, resisting it, overcoming it. There is no answer but one. That force is the Kingdom of God upon earth, the force which He revealed and wielded, the force which has as its sign the sign of strength in weakness, the sign of a long and enduring patience, the sign of the cross, the force which has its spring in love coming out from God, who is love, to find expression in the life of men. Nothing else will do instead of this, not civilization nor culture, for evil may turn each and all of these into its agent and its instrument. It is the force of the Kingdom which the gospel proclaims.<sup>1</sup>

Jesus began his public ministry with the declaration that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand. This was not "preaching" in the modern sense of the word; that is, Jesus did not prepare a formal statement of the truth, which he delivered orally as a part of an order of common religious worship. Jesus came as a "herald" and he presented his truth with the freedom of a happy messenger bearing good news to a waiting people. Hence the form in which the message was given was simple and direct and spontaneous.

<sup>1</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, pp. 31, 32. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

Preachers have been interested in many subjects, which they have studied and discussed faithfully, with profit to their hearers; but there can be no doubt that they have lacked the urgency, the passion, and the directness that come from the conviction and kindling emotion of the soul when it feels itself charged with a real message to a group of hearers. The good news concerning the Kingdom of God, as Jesus declared it, was a message of this kind. Our expectant time calls for such a word from the preacher, who will move it to nobler moods and a holier passion.

In concisest statement, the message of the Kingdom of God is the proclamation of God's reign in all the life of the world. It means that humanity belongs to God, and that God has the right to claim all the complex sphere of human life as his Kingdom. There is a supreme will of love for the world, and the principle of good-will is to sway all human affairs. This, in briefest compass, is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God.

In an age when our thought is turned so exclusively to democracy is it possible to think of God's relation to the world under the analogy of a kingdom? Would it not be better to speak of the republic of God? Or, better still, taking the name that Jesus used for God and calling him the Father, is it not better to think of the family of God, construing the Christian religion under the dear and familiar concept of home life?

Granted that the thought of kingship does not fall so closely into our democratic thinking as we would like, still it seems better to keep to the analogy that Jesus used, remembering its limitation and seeking always not to press the details of regal sovereignty too exactly into the interpretation.

A series of sermons, however, interpreting Christian truth according to the analogy of the family would probably be profitable both to the preacher and to the congregation, for there are many fresh and stimulating suggestions that could be developed in such a study.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON THE KINGDOM OF GOD

### SUGGESTION I

"Repent ye; for the Kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 3:1).

#### THE MORAL IMPERATIVE OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

This is a part of the message of John the Baptizer. It is still an imperative to our time.

- I. The righteous will of the King defines the law of the Kingdom.
- II. The citizens of the Kingdom must therefore be righteous.
- III. The call of the Kingdom is therefore a summons to repentance and new moral life.

### SUGGESTION 2

"From that time began Jesus to preach, and to say, Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. 4:17).

#### THE KINGDOM OF GOD

This is an outline study of the figure which Jesus used to bring his first message to the people. An analogy is one of the most difficult forms in which to express a truth, for it is bound to break down at some point if it is pressed too far. Therefore the central idea in the figure must be kept clear and minor details subordinated to it.

- I. The authority of the Kingdom.
- II. The laws of the Kingdom.
- III. The citizens of the Kingdom.
- IV. The King and his personal sway.



### SUGGESTION 3

“The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till it was all leavened” (Matt. 13:33).

#### THE YEAST OF LOVE AND TRUTH

This is a study in the process and power of fermentation. The germs of the Kingdom of God, the chief of which are love and truth, are placed in the world and are gradually transforming it.

- I. The world, which is completely to be changed by the Kingdom.
- II. The yeast, which is a living power.
- III. The process, which involves contact for its realization, works silently and steadily by the methods of life, and in the end reaches every particle of the mass.

### SUGGESTION 4

“And he called to him a little child, and set him in the midst of them, and said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye turn, and become as little children, ye shall in no wise enter into the kingdom of heaven” (Matt. 18:2, 3).

#### THE GATES TO THE KINGDOM

Note the incident: The disciples were wrangling about their supremacy in the Kingdom of Heaven. Jesus gave them an object-lesson. He called a lad (not a baby) to come to his side. The boy obeyed. He must have considered Jesus a friend whom he could trust. Then Jesus said, You must enter the Kingdom like this, that is, through three gates:

- I. Love. The boy must have cared for Jesus.
- II. Trust. The boy was willing to trust Jesus.
- III. Obedience. The boy obeyed Jesus.

*c) Christianity.*—Considered in the broadest sense of the term, has Christianity passed through any essential modification in the process of the Great War? At the beginning one often heard the judgment that the

War marked the collapse of the Christian religion. Certainly it did not prevent the War, nor was it able in any essential degree to mitigate its horrors. The inspiration and sanction of Christianity undoubtedly lay behind all the noble and beneficent work of the Red Cross and similar agencies for the relief of suffering. But the terrible business of the War itself went on in spite of all the teachings and ideals of Christianity.

Does this mean, however, that the Great War came because of Christianity or in spite of it? Certainly no one would claim that it is on account of Christianity that the War was begun or continued. Indeed the fairest judgment of all is that the very existence of the War simply proves that Christianity never has been tried. The War itself was a mighty challenge to give the Christian religion a real opportunity to show what its message and power were.

We are warranted, therefore, in saying that the Great War gave Christianity a supreme opportunity to prove its power in furnishing the spiritual motives for the work of reconstruction. There never has been a time in which the Christian religion could be expected to perform its functions with such effectiveness as in this very era when the new ideals and institutions are to be shaped.

.. In one respect at least it is clear that the War influenced our conception of Christianity. It simplified it and revealed its essential content. Donald Hankey puts the matter in this way:

The most perfect form of Christianity is just the abiding sense of loyalty to a divine Master—the abiding sense of the dramatic which never loses sight of the Master's figure, and which

continually enables a man to see himself in the rôle of the trusted and faithful disciple, so that he is always trying to live up to his part.<sup>1</sup>

Thus we are coming to construe the Christian religion as essentially the religion of Jesus. This means not only the religion that Jesus himself made real in his own experience, but also that religion which finds Jesus an object upon whom its faith may rest and in whom its trust may be placed.

Of course this reduces to the sphere of the nonessential many elements in institutional Christianity which often have been regarded as of its very substance. To accept such a shrinkage will be difficult, especially for those who have been officially charged with the preservation of denominational watchwords. But such a change must be faced fearlessly. No values will be surrendered that may not be yielded with satisfaction by anyone who has discovered the new interpretation of Christianity which has been wrought by the War.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON CHRISTIANITY

At first glance it might seem as if the New Testament would abound in texts and subjects on the Christian religion. But the definitions of Christianity came after the New Testament books had assumed their fixed form, and adequate texts do not appear as abundantly as they would be expected if this were not the case. The following are appropriate, however.

##### SUGGESTION I

"Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me" (John 14:1).

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 1, p. 177. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

#### THE FAITH THAT COMFORTS

- I. The God and Father of Jesus Christ and what it means to believe in him.
- II. Jesus Christ the Lord and what it means to believe in him.
- III. The practical results of this twofold faith.

#### SUGGESTION 2

"Only let your manner of life be worthy of the gospel of Christ" (Phil. 1:27).

#### CITIZENS OF THE GOSPEL

Note the margin, "behave as citizens worthily."

- I. The privileges of gospel citizenship.
- II. The laws of gospel citizenship.
- III. The service of gospel citizenship.

#### SUGGESTION 3

"And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say?" (Luke 6:46).

#### THE TWOFOLD TEST

Christianity must have its standards. They are set forth here by Jesus himself:

- I. The test of faith. We must render allegiance to Christ. In our minds and hearts Jesus must become Lord.
- II. The test of action. We must square our creed to our deed. Conduct must follow conviction. We must do what Jesus says when we have accepted him as Master.

NOTE.—The distinctive faith of Christianity is dealt with more fully in chapter ix, where other sermon suggestions are given.

d) *The Christian church*.—The Great War brought the Christian church forward as a subject of criticism and an object of loyalty at the same time. On the one hand it has been exalted, on the other it has been disparaged and censured.

H. G. Wells disposes of the whole matter of the church in a sentence, solving the problem by a snap of the finger in a style peculiarly Wellsian. He says: "The church with its sacraments and its sacerdotalism is the disease of Christianity."<sup>1</sup> A slapdash judgment like that solves no problems and makes no contribution to the constructive program of religion. Mr. Wells may be honest in his judgment, but it is superficial.

Turning to other observers and fairer critics, we find Mr. Sherwood Eddy saying:

"The men simply have no time for it [the church]. They do not care for the church because it does not care for them." There is a general feeling that the churches do not understand them or sympathize with the social and industrial disabilities of the men. They feel that the ideals of life for which the church stands are dull, dim, and altogether unnatural; its standard of comfort and complacent respectability makes no appeal to them, and they have no part or lot in it.<sup>2</sup>

There is nothing especially new in this judgment, nor is it peculiar to the soldiers. Such opinions might have been heard broadly and freely expressed before the War began. Probably this was the general verdict with the great majority of industrial workers. But it brings a certain sense of disheartenment when we know that the soldiers also entertained this idea.

We turn to Tiplady for an expression of opinion concerning the attitude of the soldiers toward the church and read as follows:

But while they connect their belief in the Christian virtues with Christ, they do not—the bulk of them—connect these virtues

<sup>1</sup> *God the Invisible King*, p. 153. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *With Our Soldiers in France*, p. 152. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

with the church. Christ is a "White Man," but they suspect the ordinary churchgoing Christian of being but a whitewashed man. Scratch him, and they fear the white will come off.<sup>1</sup>

While this is in general accord with the judgment of Mr. Eddy, there is a significant item involved in it that is worth brief consideration. The soldier does not connect with the church the standards or the virtues which he approves because he has not seen these qualities exemplified in the daily life of the men who are connected with the churches. The difficulty does not lie, therefore, in the way in which the standards of Christian character have been exemplified in the personal example of Christ or have been presented by the preachers. The failure lies with the members of the churches, who have not made good with those standards in their own conduct. Thus the primary responsibility in this case seems to lie not with the preachers, but with the laymen. The trouble will be corrected by a change in the average level of Christian conduct on the part of the churchgoing people.

But if this is the case, it surely indicates that preachers must present this situation to their people and urge upon them the necessity of such consistency between their creeds and their deeds as shall restore the church to a new place in the confidence of those whose interest and loyalty have suffered most serious lapse. This does not mean that the pulpit must give itself to a new emphasis upon ethical questions merely, but it does demand of preachers that they show their people plainly the need of closer connection between faith and conduct.

Donald Hankey's criticism of the church rests mainly on the ground that, instead of giving first atten-

<sup>1</sup> *The Cross at the Front*, p. 75. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.



tion to the gospel (which is "simply the imitation of Christ"), she is so occupied with a host of other questions and accidental duties that no time remains for leading men to live as Jesus did.<sup>1</sup>

But there is another side to the discussion. In spite of their criticism of the failure of the church the men in the camps and armies have great faith in the future of the Christian institutions if only they can understand their opportunity and meet their responsibility. Donald Hankey puts the case for the church in this way:

These [fighting] men will return from their experience of hardship and danger, pain and death, in a far more serious frame of mind than that in which they set out. Then, if ever, will they be willing to listen if the churches have any vital message for them, any interpretation to offer of their experiences, any ideal of a practical and inspiring kind to point to. If the churches miss that opportunity, woe betide them!<sup>2</sup>

Tiplady's judgment coincides with this so closely that it ought to be read alongside. He says:

After the war the church will have a new and supreme opportunity—the finest history has provided. But it must prepare for it; and the only adequate preparation is a fresh study of the life and teaching of Christ.<sup>3</sup>

Here is a profitable method of preparation to meet the new opportunity which the writer sees opening before the church at the close of the War. Tiplady makes another suggestion worth considering at this point. It is as follows:

Does the church love? When a mother loves, though she be a queen, she becomes interested in soap and water, sheets and blankets, boots and clothing, and many other mundane things.

<sup>1</sup> *Faith or Fear?* p. 29. Copyright by Macmillan & Co.

<sup>2</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 1, p. 196. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

<sup>3</sup> *The Cross at the Front*, p. 107. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

And when the church loves she will have something to say about rents and wages, houses and workshops, food and clothing, gardens, drains, medicine, and many other things. Where is the church's mother-love? Where is her fierce mother-wrath as she sees the children trampled in the mire? It is easy to go to church and to abstain from drinking, swearing, and gambling, but it is not easy to love.<sup>1</sup>

What light do these judgments and conclusions throw upon the task of the minister in the new day? He must continue to be, as he has been in the past, the official head of the church as the institution of the Christian religion in the world and as the means by which the Kingdom of God is to be realized among men. He will be free to criticize the church in all honesty and affection; but he will be convinced of its mission and worth and will lead it without divided or grudging devotion into its great field of community service. His work as preacher will be only a part of his larger responsibility as minister. The preparation of his sermon will be only a fraction of his painstaking labor as the leader of the public worship of the congregation. This does not mean that he will disparage his sermon or give less time to its preparation; but he never will make it an end in itself, and he will estimate its value by the way it serves the purpose of public worship. The sermon which fits the needs of the age of rebuilding will be prepared in view of the thought and yearning that has been created by the War. The psychological factors in preaching must be given new consideration, since the message, which is the heart of the sermon, must meet the standards and the spirit of the living men and women to whom it is given.

<sup>1</sup>*The Cross at the Front*, p. 107. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

There must be new frankness and freedom in facing the issues of real life in preaching. Old theological and ecclesiastical discussions and standards cannot be held so tenaciously in the presence of men who, in the long watch of the trenches and in the ebb and flow of battle, have won a new conception of what is really worth while. So a new accent of reality and concreteness must ring in the modern sermon.

This involves changes in the conventional language in which religious ideas have been expressed in the past. Words which meant something specific and precious as they were used in prayer meeting by our grandparents have little significance for men who have acquired a strangely different vocabulary in France. No honest preacher will be so stupid as to indulge in trench slang for the sake of putting his message clearly; but he will try to think in the same world and to speak to the same temper as that which his hearers have been disciplined to understand by the experiences of war.

In short, the way in which the church is to meet the needs of the new age is simply by loving and serving as Jesus did. Hankey strikes the root of the matter in his significant words, "to embody Christ." If all the churches in America were swept out of existence at this moment, new institutions would begin to appear within twenty-four hours, simply because Christ, the living lord of all good men, would necessarily be finding human organs through which to express his will in the world. The church is fairly subject to criticism for its failures; the way to make the church more efficient, however, is not to destroy it but rather to fill it more completely with the spirit of Christ, whom it embodies. There is no ground for fear that the Christian church, as the organism of

Christ, ever will perish from the earth. It is necessary in every age to re-create the church by causing it more fully to embody her Lord. This is the minister's constructive task at this moment. It is difficult, but it is fascinating, rewarding, and utterly possible of achievement.

One of the volumes of sermons produced by the War contains this expression of the church's duty in the reconstruction period:

It is not the function of the Christian church, as such, to draft political programs or to erect international organizations, but it is her duty to make men who will do these things. If, as Lord Acton has said, "Ideas are the cause and not the result of public events," and if the Christian church has the Divine Idea that is so revolutionary and creative that it can change the world, then she holds the key to the future and is bound to proclaim that Divine Idea everywhere.<sup>1</sup>

We may be sure, therefore, that the church, in the conception at least of Protestant Christianity, will always be the place where the prophets of the faith will kindle the dying fires of truth by reaffirming the ancient sanctions of religion. This is the warrant for the prayer that is used at the dedication of churches in Chadwick's beautiful "Dedication Ode":

If in dark days to come, Justice and Truth die dumb,  
Caught by brawn-shouldered Wrong and backward hurled,  
Let each past prophet's name  
Rise here to robe in flame  
Our children's hearts, and be a sign unfurled  
To hopes that, laughing ours to scorn,  
Shall fill Time's yet unbreathed horn,  
And shake the high-towered falsehoods of the world.  
For Thou, O God, holdest higher than sun or star-born fire  
Whatever springs toward Thee from man's desire.

<sup>1</sup>*Christ and the World at War*, pp. vii, viii. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

Nothing ever can take the place of the church as a source of power in awakening the conscience of the community. The preacher is still the prophet of justice and truth to the slumbering conscience. These war times have renewed the commission of all preachers and set them again in their true place to lead the churches into this heritage.

The Great War has brought us a new conception of the *message and mission of the church to the nation*. There is a vast difference between a *national church*, constituted by state authority and maintained by state resources, and a church that *conceives of its duty in terms of service to the nation*. The ideals and resources of the nation have been moved to the depths during the mighty struggle. Has the church learned anything new concerning its part in national life? This duty was expressed in the Call to the Mission of Repentance and Hope in England in the following words:

There is a real difference between a converted nation and a nation of converted individuals. All the citizens of a nation might be individually converted and yet the public life be conducted on principles other than Christian. Good Christian people kept slaves for centuries; yet now we say that slavery is an un-Christian institution. A converted nation would be one whose citizens tried to order all their relationships to one another and to other nations by Christian principles; there would very likely still be many failures; much actual wrong might still be done; but a nation ordered by justice and love, so far as it was deliberately ordered, would be something very different from what we know, and something at which no mission has hitherto directly aimed.<sup>1</sup>

Therefore the modern preacher renews the assurance and the message of the Hebrew prophet and dares to

<sup>1</sup>William Temple, *A Challenge to the Church* (London, S.P.C.L. 1917), p. 7.

speak fearlessly and plainly to the mind and conscience of the nation. He believes that religion is the supreme factor in shaping national policy, as well as in guiding individuals through an experience of sorrow. God has something to say to the nation; it is through the church that the divine message still comes to the people in their decisions and duties.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON THE CHURCH

### SUGGESTION I

“O God, thou art my God; earnestly will I seek thee:  
My soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee,  
In a dry and weary land, where no water is.  
So have I looked upon thee in the sanctuary,  
To see thy power and thy glory” (Ps. 63:1, 2).

### VISIONS OF GOD FOR DARK DAYS

- I. In the church we gain our vision of the power and glory of God.
- II. This comforts and helps us in hardship and sorrow.

A recent letter from a seminary student, now a soldier in France, describes two Sundays when he, although a Protestant, attended mass in a French church of the village near which he was stationed. He was moved deeply by the worship; the sight of the little interior and especially of the beautiful windows, one of which had a luminous figure of the Christ-child, gave him a new sense of God for his hard work; so he also found in the sanctuary the vision of the Divine Father.

### SUGGESTION 2

“We shall be satisfied with the goodness of thy house, Thy holy temple” (Ps. 65:4b).

### THE SATISFACTIONS OF THE CHURCH

Do we find the satisfaction of our soul's deepest yearnings in the worship and work of the church?

- I. The desire for knowledge satisfied by the church's teaching.



- II. The desire for spiritual certainty satisfied by the church's worship.
- III. The desire for comfort satisfied by the church's assurance of forgiveness and immortality.
- IV. The desire for comradeship in high endeavor satisfied by the church's fellowship and practical ministry.

### SUGGESTION 3

When I thought how I might know this,  
It was too painful for me;  
Until I went into the sanctuary of God,  
And considered their latter end" (Ps. 73:16, 17).

### SOLVING LIFE'S MORAL RIDDLES

- I. The problem of suffering: universal; touches evil and good alike.
- II. No solution in history or philosophy.
- III. The message of the Christian church gives the only real light on the problem.

### SUGGESTION 4

"Now ye are the body of Christ, and severally members thereof" (I Cor. 12:27).

### THE LIVING CHURCH

This text presents the ideal of the church as the *organism of Christ*. Just as the individual soul dwells in and controls the human body, so Christ animates and directs the Christian church. This is according to his promise in John 17:20, 21. Therefore the development of the subject grows out of the study of the organism.

- I. The unity of the church.
- II. The diversity of the church (members each in his part).
- III. The relation of the church to its environment.
- IV. The animation of the church by its resident Life.

## SUGGESTION 5

"And the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matt. 16:18).

## THE MILITANT CHURCH ON THE OFFENSIVE

This text has generally been interpreted as indicating the security of the church on the *defensive* against the attacks of evil represented by Hades. But this does not correctly interpret the figure. One does not fight with gates as instruments of war; gates are for defense against attacks. Therefore it is evil that is on the *defensive* and the church that is on the offensive. The promise of Jesus therefore is, "And the powers of evil shall not be able to resist or prevail against the conquering church." This gives a different point to the whole passage.

- I. Intrenched and guarded evils. Discuss them.
- II. The militant church attacking the gates of Hades. Study its forces, plan of campaign, and supreme Commander.
- III. The victory of the church. How may we expect it? The need of patience and hope.

## SUGGESTION 6

"Be thou watchful, and establish the things that remain" (Rev. 3:2).

## CONSERVING SPIRITUAL VALUES

There are various factors which must work at the task of conserving the spiritual values which will remain after the War. The political parties, the educational agencies, and the philanthropic institutions must unite in the great task. The church is prominent if not supreme among these.

- I. The "things that remain" after the War.
- II. What the church can do to conserve them.

## CHAPTER VIII

### GOD THE FATHER: HIS LOVE AND CARE

The Great War has clarified and made real the fact of God and his love and care for men. At first glance this may seem like a contradiction. So many have suffered and died! How can it be true that God knew or cared?

#### A. THE FACT OF GOD

But there is an instant and intuitive response to be discerned in the literature that the War has produced and it declares that God is still the central fact of the deepest consciousness of men. As Harry Lauder said: "You know, you do not have to talk to the laddies who are going 'over the top' about God. They are thinking about God and about home."

One turns naturally first of all to *Mr. Britling Sees It Through* for an expression of a war-bred faith in God. On that afternoon when Mr. Britling found Letty fighting the battle with her sorrow after she had heard that Teddy, her husband, was dead, he affirmed the instinctive and ancient faith in God with assured confidence. We can quote only a part of the conversation. Letty was speaking:

"The world is cruel. It is just cruel. So it will always be."

"It need not be cruel," said Mr. Britling.

"It is just a place of cruel things. It is all set with knives. It is full of diseases and accidents. As for God—either there is no God or he is an idiot. He is a slobbering idiot. He is like some idiot who pulls off the wings of flies."

"No," said Mr. Britling.

"There is no progress. Nothing gets better. How can *you* believe in God after Hugh. *Do you believe in God?*"

"Yes," said Mr. Britling after a long pause; "I do believe in God."

"Who lets these things happen!" She raised herself on her arm and thrust her argument at him with her hand. "Who kills my Teddy and your Hugh—and millions."

"No," said Mr. Britling.

"But he *must* let these things happen. Or why do they happen?"

"No," said Mr. Britling. "It is the theologians who must answer that. They have been extravagant about God. They have had silly absolute ideas—that He is all powerful. That He's omni-everything. But the common sense of men knows better. Every real religious thought denies it. After all, the real God of the Christians is Christ, not God Almighty; a poor mocked and wounded God nailed on a cross of matter. . . . Some day he will triumph."<sup>1</sup>

The God concerning whom Mr. Britling speaks so confidently to Letty is not the conventional God of Christianity. Mr. Wells explains this in *God the Invisible King* (p. ix), as follows:

This book sets out as forcibly and exactly as possible the religious belief of the writer. That belief is not orthodox Christianity; it is not, indeed, Christianity at all; its core, nevertheless, is a profound belief in a personal and intimate God.

Mr. Wells is quite right in saying that this is not the God of Christianity at all; for the Christian people always have believed in the Father God of Jesus Christ, and surely this is not the Veiled Being or the Invisible King whom Mr. Wells thinks he has discovered.

But God, as Mr. Wells conceives him, does bring hope and help into human struggle. There is something

<sup>1</sup> *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, p. 405. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

inspiring and strengthening in the thought of God as taking our part, bearing his share of the burden, and entering actively with energy and purpose into all the highest human endeavors. There could be no better antidote for the despair born of the idea of an absentee God than a firm grasp upon *the Invisible King*. As Mr. Wells puts it himself, "The finding of him is salvation from the purposelessness of life."<sup>1</sup> To be delivered from the weakness and flabbiness of a religion which has lost its consciousness of God's energetic partnership is a boon to bewildered humanity.

Thus Mr. Wells lets Mr. Britling speak in the concluding paragraphs of his book with a force and passion that is compelling. We can quote only a paragraph:

Religion is the first thing and the last thing, and until a man has found God and been found by God, he begins at no beginning, he works to no end. He may have his friendships, his partial loyalties, his scraps of honour. But all these fall into place and life falls into place only with God. Only with God. God, who fights through men against Blind Force and Night and Non-Existence; who is the end, who is the meaning. He is the only King.<sup>2</sup>

But there is another side of the literature produced by the War which is still more profitable for the preacher. The soldiers have given expression to it in their letters and in their talks. It was thrown into a fervid sentence by Donald Hankey himself:

You can't believe in God? Why, man, the very fact that you can't make a decent fist of life without this belief in God, this rational basis of optimism, is surely a sufficient proof of its truth.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *God the Invisible King*, p. 18. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Mr. Britling Sees It Through*, p. 442. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>3</sup> *Faith or Fear?* p. 21. Copyright by Macmillan & Co.

These soldiers are quick to subject the doctrine to the test of experience. As a matter of fact it works; and, without it, life does not work at all. One must choose either hope or despair; and when it comes to the final grounds of hope they are seen to include a firm faith in God.

In December, 1917, at a farewell breakfast held for fifteen young men who were leaving a little community for the training camp, every one spoke briefly. The boys were of many church communions and some of them claimed no church relationships whatever. But each man without exception referred in some way to God during his address. The sentences were built naturally into the talk and they were most genuine. Thus the men revealed that which was really fundamental in their thinking, although it had seldom come to explicit statement.

Letters from the soldiers themselves are so full of references to their intuitive sense of God that selections from the literature are difficult to make because of the very wealth of the material at hand. The following three brief quotations are typical of the way in which the soldiers met the situation and defined their faith:

"In this immense crucible, the world, time and space are melted. Into this infinitely complex mechanism, this intricate chemical process, we are thrown, atom against atom. What will come out of the whirlwind? God alone knows. But what does the knowledge of these elements so diverse and so complex matter to us? For God is there. Let us be in His hand like matter in that of the artist. Each stroke with the chisel gradually rough-hews and refines us, rids us of our original coverings and brings us towards perfection. Ah! if we only knew how to let ourselves be chiselled by our Maker. Our crime—the crime of ignorance—is that we



know not how to commit ourselves to Him. It is as though the block of marble revolted against the sculptor."<sup>1</sup>

"Sometimes a shell covered me with earth and deafened me, and then quiet fell once more upon the frosty world. I paid dear, but I had moments of solitude full of God."<sup>2</sup>

"'Amidst all that,' said a twenty-year-old non-commissioned officer to me, speaking of the hideous mêlée of the charge against a machine gun, 'the feeling grows that there must be a Supreme Being and that all this must mean something, and something great, else all is moral chaos.' The very nerve of faith is touched. Meaning or no meaning for the world's history and for human life, that, and nothing else, is the issue. God has a meaning through it all."<sup>3</sup>

Commenting on these reported impressions and experiences various writers have interpreted them in different ways; in general, however, they are quite united in their judgment that the experience of the War has given us a fresh, intuitive, and altogether more vital conception of God. The following are illustrations of this effort to interpret the new vision of God brought about by the War:

The young soldier-thinkers quoted [in preceding paragraphs discussing the consciousness of God on the part of the men in action] were none of them men who in earlier life would have talked easily of religion. We have become less awkward in acknowledging that we stand in the presence of mysteries too deep for us. A young doctor gone to the front recently startled the society acquaintance he had left by writing home, "There is no fear here but the fear of God." God and immortality have

<sup>1</sup>Captain Ferdinand Belmont, quoted in *The Good Soldier*, p. 75.

<sup>2</sup>"Lettres d'un Soldat," quoted in Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 88. Copyright by the Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>3</sup>*Christ and the World at War*, p. 31. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

become facts for our everyday life, while they were only words, and words avoided, before.<sup>1</sup>

The next comment is by a shrewd observer, who has been at the Front, and whose conclusions are always marked by insight and good judgment:

There is no infidelity in the trenches. Of scepticism concerning the refinements of religion there is much, but of repudiation of God there is practically none. In the long, quiet times of waiting in the trenches and dugouts and in the billets there is vastly more of thought and discussion upon the loftiest themes than is ever suspected by the folk at home. Out of the tremendous experience which has broken the shackles of the old manner of thinking and living, have been born certain general conclusions and convictions.

Our armies believe in God. There has been no national propaganda among the Allies, such as the Germans have vigorously prosecuted, to proclaim the identity of our cause with the divine purpose and will. Nevertheless, the home training of the troops, and the atmosphere of our whole previous life, has led them to face the eternal reality at this time. They believe in a great God, whose ways are past finding out, but who is manifestly doing something with humanity by means of this cataclysm. It is not a little drawing-room God, flattered to be patted on the head by blasé society faddists; nor yet a vindictive tribal deity, that the soldiers have come to accept. He is "Jehovah of the thunders, Lord God of battles."

Also the God honored in the trenches is a good God. His other name is love. He is tolerant of a soldier's frailties, and, in some ill-defined sense, a fellow worker with the man who is staking his life to bring righteousness to pass on earth. This God will deal gently with the fallen. For the average soldier is a fatalist. He would express himself, if he were in the habit of quoting Scripture, by some such passage as "My times are in Thy hand." His it is to be a good soldier; for the rest he trusts the good God.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 93. Copyright by the Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> William T. Ellis, *The New Theology of the Trenches*.

Another comment which ought to be compared with the foregoing, coming from a quite different source, is this:

. . . . the approach to God is to-day immediate, intense, practical, in its cry for instant guidance through this horror. A few years ago we avoided thinking about God as easily as we avoided thinking about death. That indifference is destroyed. We find thoughtful men, especially in England and France, looking back with shame at our days of facile faithlessness, equally aghast at our former disregard of the divine, and at the Kaiser's championship of a tribal God of battle revived from an age grown almost legendary.<sup>1</sup>

These conclusions are summed up in the following glowing stanzas:

WHAT DID YOU SEE OUT THERE, MY LAD?<sup>2</sup>

*What did you see out there, my lad,  
That has set that look in your eyes?  
You went out a boy, you have come back a man,  
With strange new depths underneath your tan;  
What was it you saw out there, my lad,  
That set such deeps in your eyes?*

Strange things,—and sad,—and wonderful,—  
Things that I scarce can tell,—  
I have been in the sweep of the Reaper's scythe,—  
With God,—and Christ,—and hell.

I have seen Christ doing Christly deeds;  
I have seen the devil at play;  
I have grimped to the sod in the hand of God;  
I have seen the God-less pray.

<sup>1</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 86. Copyright by the Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> John Oxenham, *The Vision Splendid*, p. 31. Copyright (1917) by George H. Doran Co., publishers.

I have seen Death blast out suddenly  
 From a clear blue summer sky;  
 I have slain like Cain with a blazing brain;  
 I have heard the wounded cry.

I have lain alone among the dead,  
 With no hope but to die;  
 I have seen them killing the wounded ones;  
 I have seen them crucify.

I have seen the Devil in petticoats  
 Wiling the souls of men;  
 I have seen great sinners do great deeds  
 And turn to their sins again.

I have sped through hells of fiery hail,  
 With fell red-fury shod;  
 I have heard the whisper of a voice;  
 I have looked in the face of God.

*You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,  
 You have met God in the ways;  
 And no man looks into his face  
 But he feels it all his days.  
 You've a right to your deep, high look, my lad,  
 And we thank Him for His grace.*

#### B. THE GOD OF JESUS

The Christian preacher does not need to spend much time either with the metaphysical God of the elaborate creeds or with the Deity whom Mr. Wells is sure he has rescued from their strangling folds. The noblest and most satisfactory term for God that we can find is simply this: *The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

The God with whom the people need to come into personal relations in this constructive age is the Father whom Jesus told us about and with whom he lived in unbroken and happy fellowship. We must distinguish between the explanations that are given to interpret an experience and the experience itself, a vital fact. We must return to the very experience of Jesus himself as he lived his earthly life and passed through all the joys and sorrows through which we also must pass. The simple reading of the Four Gospels reveals this fact as clear as the light of day: Jesus never lost for one moment his sense of conscious union with God the Father. This was the substance of his life. It brought him strength and joy and peace. It was more real than the lumber and tools that he handled when he was a carpenter, the friends in Bethany, or the nails that drove through his quivering flesh on Calvary. It is impossible to understand Jesus apart from this supreme item of his conscious life. He may be interpreted as the child of his time, in the full light of archaeology and social science. He may be studied by the psychologist with bewildering detail. He may be subjected to the investigation of metaphysician and theologian, as he has been without disaster for centuries. But the real interpretation of Jesus does not call for any or all these elaborate processes. Jesus was simply a man so mastered and possessed by God the Father that he could say without hypocrisy, *I and my Father are one.* His enemies jumped at this statement as ground for the charge of blasphemy because they interpreted it in the terms of metaphysics and theology. But the plain man knows that it is true. It is a vital and a

moral unity which has become more lustrous and compelling as the centuries have passed.

Therefore we believe that the preacher today is simply compelled to study again Jesus' consciousness of God as the chief *datum* for his preaching. No more profitable piece of work can be outlined in preparation for constructive preaching than three months spent on the gospels in the painstaking effort to define Christ's experience of God. Use your imagination; call to your help every possible resource in scholarship and interpretation; but chiefly and all the time work your way into the very core and center of the life of Jesus. Get the motives from which he acted. Define the aims toward which he steadily drove. Realize the reserves which he called up when he was in any stress of spirit. Out of it all formulate *the Master's conception of God*. There are not many books to be read on the subject; there is intensely earnest thinking to be done.

Then give the people the result. Let them see the God of Jesus. There will be no uncertainty about that. No "Veiled Being" will emerge from this study. Jesus Christ knew God and we can learn if we will the kind of God he knew and loved and obeyed. This, we repeat, is the God whom our bewildered time needs to know. The Christian preacher alone has this message for our day. Why should we grope through volumes of philosophy and pages of poetry and books of mystic rapture first of all in our quest for God? Let them all come later. They are useful. But turn to the gospels and discern the God of Jesus. That is the subject for preaching today. It kindles; it inspires; it saves.



C. GOD'S PROVIDENTIAL CARE

We cannot examine carefully Christ's experience of God without discovering that it roots in the unshakable trust of Jesus in the Father's personal love and care. This fact stands out on every page of the gospels. Not only did Jesus affirm that this was true, but he lived every hour with this as his great assurance and help. He practiced what he taught.

We are told that the soldiers in the trenches were almost universally fatalists. They saw such unexplainable freaks of bullet and shell that they soon reduced the whole problem to a mere declaration that "You will go West when the time comes." The following bits of soldier philosophy on this point are from the writings of Donald Hankey (Jim is speaking, and he is direct and positive in what he has to say about a soldier's behavior): "I ain't stuck on dyin' afore my time, and I don't know as I'm greatly stuck on livin', but, whichever it is, you got ter make the best on it."<sup>1</sup> In another place the following dialogue is reported:

"LANCE CORPORAL: I think you goes when your time comes, sir. But it won't come tonight, sir. Not after all we been through this spell, and the spell just finished.

"DODD: I believe you're right, Corporal. We shall go when the time comes, and not before. I like that idea, you know. It means one hasn't got to worry."<sup>2</sup>

Another soldier has written:

We all know, those of us on the firing-line, that to-morrow or the day after, we too will probably follow the others. Well, so let it be if God wills it. He who holds in His hands our destinies

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 2, p. 111. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131, 132.

knew that this or that event would happen. If I die, it is because that is His wish, and if that is His wish, it is well and there is nothing to complain about. I can live and die only through His will. So have confidence and be calm.<sup>1</sup>

Those who are actively engaged in serving the moral and spiritual needs of the men bear substantially the same testimony.

It is universally acknowledged that soldiers are mostly fatalists in time of battle. "If your luck's in, it's in; if it's out, it's out" is the common attitude. Only the bullet with a man's name and address on it will ever hit him; but no parapet will shield him when that one comes along.<sup>2</sup>

The author of this paragraph says that the soldier has no answer of his own to the question of responsibility for the War; but he does expect that the church will have one and he is eager to know what it will be. He adds: "Christian teachers will be put on their mettle in days to come by men who will want plain English on fundamental matters."

This same outlook was found in the case of the home folk, too. After every human precaution had been taken, after all our prayers had been said, we all tended to leave our loved ones in the hands of God, saying in some form or other, "God wills it," or "Whatever is, is best." This did not mean the refuge of the perplexed soul in crass fatalism; it only meant that we felt that there was love and goodness above all the apparent chance and suffering of war. And this faith we shall carry into the new day, when we shall need more than

<sup>1</sup> *A Soldier Unafraid*, p. 28. Copyright by Little, Brown & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Maclean and Sclater, *God and the Soldier*, p. 12. Copyright (1918) by George H. Doran Co., publishers.

ever to be steadied by an unfaltering trust in what Whittier so well called "the eternal goodness."

There is no irreconcilable difference, of course, between implicit trust in God's providential care and the acceptance of the fact that death comes when our "time" is fixed. It was God's care that allowed the plots of Jesus' enemies to still his strong young heart in physical death. Thus Jesus himself accepted it; and thus the Christian believes. Death is far from the worst experience that can come to the individual person.

It is rather a matter of emphasis than the harmonizing of apparent contradictories. What we need to do in the modern pulpit is to present the way in which Jesus accepted the fact of God's care even at the point where it involved the temporary triumph of his enemies and the loss of his own physical existence on the cross. Jesus "carried on" to the mortal end and his faith never wavered. God's will was right and good and he met it in serene triumph.

In the pulpit and parish the minister today may confidently take his position with Jesus as he preaches and goes on his errands of counsel and hope into the homes of the congregation. That which worked successfully with Jesus may be trusted to bring help and relief to those who are facing situations similar to that which called to his lips the prayer, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON GOD AND PROVIDENCE

At this point we are overwhelmed by the wealth of biblical material at our disposal. The Bible is the

exhaustless treasury of truth concerning God and his relations to men. The following, however, are passages appropriate to the theme just considered:

#### SUGGESTION I

"In the year that King Uzziah died I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and his train filled the temple" (Isa. 6:1).

#### GOD'S GREATNESS REVEALED IN A NATIONAL CRISIS

The time when God's greatness is most needed is in an age like the present, when the most titanic of human and physical forces have been in action and when the vastest problems of history have been thrust upon the mind. A small God might match the needs of a little world; but nothing less than a great God can meet the demands of our great generation.

It has been said that, in proposing his conception of Deity, Mr. Wells has "substituted a godling for God." Certainly "an impoverished, struggling, half-helpless God can never be the God of Christianity."<sup>1</sup>

In developing the truth that God is "high and lifted up," use these stanzas from Sidney Lanier:

"As the marsh-hen secretly builds on the watery sod,  
Behold I will build me a nest on the greatness of God:  
I will fly in the greatness of God as the marsh-hen flies  
In the freedom that fills all the space 'twixt the marsh and  
the skies:  
By so many roots as the marsh-grass sends in the sod  
I will heartily lay me a hold on the greatness of God:  
O, like to the greatness of God is the greatness within  
The range of the marshes, the liberal marshes of Glynn."<sup>2</sup>

Surely the day has come with texts and materials like these to refresh the souls of the congregations with a mighty affirmation of the great God. It can be done now; for the Great War has

<sup>1</sup> Maclean and Solater, *God and the Soldier*, p. 17.

<sup>2</sup> "The Marshes of Glynn," *Poems*, p. 17.

created a background of vastness and expectation which warrants such preaching. A smug and petty age did not call for it; but the new age does. The Christian preacher must believe in God mightily.

#### SUGGESTION 2

“Save me from the lion’s mouth;  
Yea, from the horns of the wild-oxen thou hast answered me”  
(Ps. 22:21).

“Jehovah that delivered me out of the paw of the lion, and out of the paw of the bear, he will deliver me out of the hand of this Philistine” (I Sam. 17:37).

#### THE APPEAL TO EXPERIENCE

Note the clearer meaning given to the first text by the revisers’ translation. Develop the material in the form of a discussion of this proposition: God has helped and saved in the past; *therefore* God will save and help today.

#### SUGGESTION 3

“Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies” (Ps. 23:5).

#### EATING UNDER SHELL FIRE

- I. The stress of life, represented by the presence of enemies.
- II. The calmness and replenishment of life represented by eating.
- III. These two can be harmonized only by the presence and power of God.

#### SUGGESTION 4

“He saith in his heart: God hath forgotten,  
He hideth his face, he will never see it.  
Thou hast seen it; for thou beholdest mischief and spite,  
to requite it with thy hand” (Ps. 10:11, 14).

#### GOD HAS NOT LOST HIS MEMORY

- I. The folly of failing to reckon with God.
- II. The wisdom of trusting the God who remembers and rewards.

## SUGGESTION 5

"In all their affliction he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them: in his love and in his pity he redeemed them; and he bare them and carried them all the days of old" (Isa. 63:9).

## THE SAVIOR GOD

This is one of the texts whose wealth and beauty appear as one broods reverently upon it. Linger thoughtfully upon every word, phrase, and clause. Let the imagery glow before your mind as your imagination discovers it. Catch the stately rhythm of the English. Then develop the material textually.

- I. God suffers with us.
- II. God saves us in affliction.
- III. God redeems us in his love and pity.
- IV. God carries us tenderly through the long process of redemption.

## SUGGESTION 6

"Thou shalt have no other gods before me" (Exod. 20:3).

## FIRST, GOD

We need to return to the moral and religious sanctions of the Ten Commandments. They place God first; all that is good in human life flows forth from that fact. After a brief discussion of the proposition, show what it would mean to place God first in:

- I. Individual motives and conduct.
- II. Industrial relationships.
- III. Civic duties.
- IV. International duties and privileges.

## SUGGESTION 7

"And though man be risen up to pursue thee, and to seek thy soul, yet the soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of life with Jehovah thy God; and the souls of thine enemies, them shall he sling out, as from the hollow of a sling" (I Sam. 25:29).



THE GUARDIAN OF THE TREASURES

Note the paraphrase of H. P. Smith in the *International Critical Commentary*: "The soul of my lord shall be bound in the bundle of the living, in the care of Yahweh thy God." The figure refers to the binding into a bundle of the precious and treasured things which their owner watches over with ceaseless and tender care.

- I. The soul of a man. Every life is precious, to itself and to God. A human spirit is beyond price.
- II. The bundle of the living. We are bound up with one another in the complex, intimate relations of daily life.
- III. The guardian God. This precious bundle of life is personally preserved by the God to whom it has supreme worth.

SUGGESTION 8

"For I was ashamed to ask of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way, because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them that seek him, for good; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was entreated of us" (Ezra 8:22, 23).

LIVING UP TO OUR PROMISES FOR GOD

Study the historical situation. Ezra had affirmed the power of Jehovah to protect those who were seeking to do his will. Now, having proclaimed his reliance upon God, should he act as if he relied only on the military escort of the king? He carried his trust through to the limit. He had made promises for God; he lived up to them. Apply this principle in personal religious life and in national relations.

SUGGESTION 9

"The God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (I Pet. 1:3).

THE GOD WHOM WE NEED TODAY

- I. Jesus' experience of God. A brief survey of his life and teaching, showing how he never for a conscious moment lost his assurance of God's nearness and care.

- II. The God of Jesus is the God for us today. However the times have changed, the fundamental needs of the soul have not altered. We need the God of Jesus as never before.
- III. How to make the God of Jesus ours.
- a) By the study of the Master.
  - b) By making the master-motives of Jesus ours.
  - c) By the complete surrender of ourselves to God in Christ.

## SUGGESTION 10

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? and not one of them shall fall on the ground without your Father" (Matt. 10:29).

"Are not five sparrows sold for two pence? and not one of them is forgotten in the sight of God" (Luke 12:6).

THE FIFTH SPARROW

The suggestive item in the two texts lies in the variants. Evidently two "sayings" of Jesus are reported; each is accurate when judged by the customs of the day. Sparrows were one of the cheapest articles of food for sale in the market. The bodies of the little birds were spitted or strung and thus offered for sale at a cent apiece or five for four cents.

The merchant was willing to throw in the fifth sparrow as not worth the counting. Jesus said that not one is forgotten in the sight of God. That is, the Father's love goes far beyond the usual careful and exacting reckoning of the merchant, and where the man is ready to give up the fifth sparrow for a four-cent trade, God still cares and counts. This is a legitimate inference from the two texts. It adds stress to the common and familiar insistence of Jesus upon the providential care of God.

## CHAPTER IX

### CHRIST THE LORD

We come now to the distinct message of Christianity. It is summed up most concisely in the simple words, "God in Christ." It was the mission and work of Christ which differentiated Christianity from Judaism and has given it power and permanence in history. It was a religion among other religions; it was the supreme expression of religion, destined to become universal. Men found God in Christ; they were brought to a new life in union with Christ; and because they had met this transforming experience they were confident in telling all the world that this was indeed the way of salvation.

There have been many periods in the history of the Christian people when, for a time at least, this unique and central truth was obscured. But it always has emerged finally again into clearness and control. The permanence of Christianity is forever bound up with the fact of Christ as the Savior and Lord of the individual Christian and of the society which the Christian people create.

What has the Great War done to exalt or to modify the central significance of Christ in the lives of his followers? How has it changed the content or the form of the Christian gospel, which it is the office of the Christian church to proclaim to the ends of the earth? Undoubtedly it has thrown into relative obscurity certain

doctrines of the person of Christ which have been concerned with the theological or metaphysical explanation of his nature and mission. This does not prove that such explanations have no permanent place in Christian thinking; it only means that for the time at least speculative interest in the Christ of the Christian dogma has ceased to hold a conspicuous place in men's minds.

But has Christ, as a personal and living force in the daily experience of men, ceased to exert power? For an answer to this question we must turn, in the nature of the case, to the literature which the War has been producing. How do men who have themselves been in the trenches and shared the inmost life of the soldiers feel on this matter? Donald Hankey is the interpreter to whom we turn most naturally for testimony. He wrote:

Something is wrong, and an ever-increasing number of men and women within the church are feeling that all this strife and controversy now going on between the denominations is beside the point; that in it the gospel is lost sight of; that what we want to do is just to drop all these questions, and to get back to the main point, which is, after all, to embody Christ.<sup>1</sup>

This simple phrase, *to embody Christ*, needs interpretation. It means that we are actually to furnish a body through which the still living and personal Christ can get his will done on earth. He is dead as far as a physical body is concerned. Thus he must touch modern life through another body than the one in which he once dwelt in Palestine. Where is he to find this? In you and in me, as we yield ourselves to Christ in such complete surrender to his will that we may say in all fair

<sup>1</sup> *Faith or Fear?* p. 29. Copyright by Macmillan & Co.

use of the words, that we *embody him*. Hankey touched this point somewhat more fully, saying:

As I write now I have absolutely no doubt of the power of Christ to transform character and life, to change the poor physical pygmies that we men are into beloved sons of God and inheritors of life eternal. And that is why I feel bound to do what I can to try to increase the vitality and efficiency of Christ's body the Church, that it may prove in the future a more adequate medium for the exercise of His wonderful power and love than it has been in the past.<sup>1</sup>

Tiplady does not agree with Hankey in the statement that the soldiers believe in the Christian virtues but do not connect them with Christ in any vital way. He says, on the contrary, that "Christ is the background of all their moral and religious thinking. . . . Take Christ away, and he [the soldier] would feel as desolate and lost as if you took the sky away. He never forgets, in his heart, that there once lived on this earth a real 'White Man.'"<sup>2</sup>

Tiplady, so far as we can judge, knows the soul of the soldier as well as Hankey. Both are certainly agreed that Christ does have power to transform the lives of men from weakness into strength by the addition of himself as a definite factor of energy to the struggle for Christian character.

We strike here a distinction which must be made clear in Christian thinking and preaching. There is a vast difference between *Christ as intellectually realized* and *Christ as a power actually felt in the living of daily*

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>2</sup> *The Cross at the Front*, p. 74. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

life. This has been shown clearly in an illuminating sermon by Rev. J. D. Jones, in which he says:

Paul became a really converted man—not simply when God revealed his Son *to* him, but when he revealed his Son *within* him; not when the real nature of Christ was revealed to his mind, but when the redeeming power of Christ was actually felt in his soul.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly much time has been spent in seeking to present *clear and reasonable ideas about Christ*. And we must continue to do this. Faith, in a vital sense, is dependent upon the way in which the believer may proceed upon a clear conception of the object of his faith. But the stern issues of this period of constructive action upon which we are entering demand that we shall be able to carry on from clear mental pictures to compelling personal motives. We must furnish men who are engaged in the fierce battle for character with new power to complement their own strength and thus make them victorious over sin. This new power, if the continuous witness of the Christian people is true, is nothing less than Christ himself, unseen but personal and living, becoming a resident in our bodies, possessing our wills, and adding the energies of his own divine Self to our human powers.

This is the modern interpretation of what has been called the "Mystic Union," concerning which Paul spoke so clearly in Gal. 2:20. New terms must be discovered by which to present this old experience to the new age, for the future of our Christianity depends upon it. As Professor D. S. Cairns says:

The new world that will come after the war must arise out of the fellowship of Christian men with the risen Lord. He must

<sup>1</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 96. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.



have the creating of it, and he can only create it through the mediation of dedicated lives.<sup>1</sup>

There are many expressions of this conviction in the literature that has come out of the war. Perhaps none is more vivid than the following familiar poem, with its haunting repetitions and its accurate reflection of the average preoccupied mind:

CHRIST IN FLANDERS<sup>2</sup>

We had forgotten You, or very nearly—  
You did not seem to touch us very nearly—  
Of course we thought about You now and then:  
Especially in any time of trouble—  
We knew that You were good in time of trouble—  
But we are very ordinary men.

And there were always other things to think of—  
There's lots of things a man has got to think of—  
His work, his home, his pleasure, and his wife:  
And so we only thought of You on Sunday—  
Sometimes, perhaps, not even on a Sunday—  
Because there's always lots to fill one's life.

And all the while, in street or lane or by-way—  
In country lane, or city street, or by-way—  
You walked among us and we did not see.  
Your feet were bleeding as You walked our pavements—  
How did we miss your footprints on our pavements?  
Can there be other folk as blind as we?

Now we remember: over here in Flanders—  
(It isn't strange to think of You in Flanders)—  
This hideous warfare seems to make things clear.  
We never thought about You much in England—  
But, now that we are far away from England—  
We have no doubts, we know that You are here.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>2</sup> Lucy Whitmell in *The Spectator*.

You helped us pass the jest along the trenches—  
Where, in cold blood, we waited in the trenches—  
You touched its ribaldry and made it fine.  
You stood beside us in our pain and weakness—  
We're glad to think You understand our weakness—  
Somehow it seems to help us not to whine.

We think about You kneeling in the garden—  
Ah, God! the agony of that dread garden—  
We know You prayed for us upon the cross.  
If anything could make us glad to bear it—  
'Twould be the knowledge that You willed to bear it—  
Pain—death—the uttermost of human loss.

Though we forgot You—You will not forget us—  
We feel so sure that You will not forget us—  
But stay with us until this dream is past.  
And so we ask for courage, strength, and pardon—  
Especially, I think, we ask for pardon—  
And that You'll stand beside us to the last.

The opportunities for service of all kinds which the War made possible revealed new meanings in the familiar thought of ministering to others, not merely in the name of Christ, but actually in his stead. Among the innumerable examples of this the following is worthy of note:

Here is a stalwart Sikh. He is homesick and depressed. He has had no word from home for months and is longing for a glimpse of the old place and of his wife and little boys. Suddenly there is a cheery greeting and he looks up into the smiling face of an American Association Secretary from the Punjab. Soon the story is out. That night a letter goes from the Secretary to a missionary friend near the Sikh's home. The weeks pass by and again the Secretary comes upon the soldier, lonely and miserable. He takes from his pocket a snapshot of the Sikh's wife and boys, with the home in the background, and hands it to the soldier. And the big fellow is not ashamed of his tears, as he salaams again

and again in gratitude. This is not fancy but blessed fact. In an endless variety of ways the hand of Christ is being stretched out to these men who have come from the ends of the earth.<sup>1</sup>

For a long time a new apologetic literature—or at least a fresh statement of an old line of defense—had been appearing. It consisted of a report on the actual experience of men and women whose whole life had been changed by faith in Christ and surrender to him. The course of conduct was changed; new character was created. There was no doubt concerning the *fact*, which was not explained but was simply affirmed.<sup>2</sup> This literature has been augmented and this testimony additionally stressed by the War. We shall be able to offer many new examples of the reality and power of the living Christ. He is not a great hero dead and buried in Palestine centuries ago; he is alive now, and he enters in personal union with the human spirit, adding the power that enables us to conquer our sins and achieve a character like his own.

There is no better expression of the central meaning of Paul's spiritual experience than is to be found in the great poem by F. W. H. Myers entitled "Saint Paul." The first printing of this was in 1867 and it is one of the classics of Christian poetry. We read it too seldom. It repays most careful study; it is a source of inspiration to the Christian preacher. Paul's own words, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor

<sup>1</sup> Murray, *The Call of a World Task*, p. 87. Copyright by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> Begbie, *Twice Born Men*, *Souls in Action*, and *Other Sheep*; Roberts, *The Dry Dock of a Thousand Wrecks*; Scandlin, *The Wicked John Goode*.

free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus," give the keynote to the noble interpretation of Paul's supreme motive. The first and last stanzas of the poem are as follows:

Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,  
 Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:  
 Lo with no winning words I would entice you,  
 Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ.

Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning  
 He shall suffice me, for He hath sufficed:  
 Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,  
 Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ.

A morning spent with this kindling poem will cause the winter's preaching to glow with new light and heat. The fact that Christ is the Master of the soul will appear with fresh force and beauty. Among the most fervent of the books which the soldiers have written is one of Giosuè Borsi, in which he breaks into this passionate utterance:

But I believe also that by going to war voluntarily I am doing my duty and obeying one of Thy holy precepts, Jesus Christ, blessed and true God. Thou hast told me to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's; in life Thou wert the perfect model of a good citizen, amenable and respectful to the law and obedient to Thy lawful masters. Thou didst tenderly and ardently love Thy earthly fatherland, Thou Son of David, splendid flower of the purest blood of Israel. Thou didst make marvelous efforts to save and lead Thy own unappreciative and ungrateful people to glory and to melt its faction-rent and contrary heart. Thou didst weep over the evil and irremediable future of that Jerusalem that was about to murder Thee. And finally, Thou wert silent before Herod, not merely because the tyrant was unworthy of an

answer, but because Thou sawest in him the usurper of the rights of Thy race, with his illegitimate presence brutally desecrating the sacred and glorious memories of the palace of the Maccabees.<sup>1</sup>

Undoubtedly the average Christian soldier would not feel comfortable in quite so elevated an atmosphere as this. Young men who have not read St. Augustine and Dante, as Borsi had, would think the experience unreal and the language extravagant. But this Italian officer means exactly what he says. The experience is part of the hardship of the trenches; his language is as genuine as was the word of command which sent him forward one day to die valiantly for Christ and Italy.

In England there has been more than one effort to meet the religious needs of the nation by a new presentation of Christ the Lord. The following is from a statement of the purpose of the National Mission of Repentance and Hope in 1916:

A penitent Church will say to the nation: "There is only one source of healing for what is amiss: it is the gospel of the love of God in Christ. We call you to trust in that; for nations, as for individuals, there is no other welfare. We ourselves have not been faithful to the whole of our commission. That is our shame; it is also our hope. For if by deeper trust we can become more faithful in the future, we shall prove more fully the truth of our testimony that the Lord whom we worship is the Saviour of the world."<sup>2</sup>

One more quotation must suffice. It comes from a collection of sermons in war time, published in England,

<sup>1</sup> *A Soldier's Confidences with God*, p. 205. Copyright by P. J. Kenedy & Sons, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> William Temple, *A Challenge to the Churches* (London, S.P.C.K., 1917), p. 10.

and states the Christian faith in the primacy of Christ the Lord:

We believe with a belief that is stronger than ever now that Christ is the Fountain-Head from which justice draws its strength, and loyalty its self-sacrifice, and patriotism its responsibility and self-restraint, and even war, while war lasts, its chivalry and honour.<sup>1</sup>

This means that we must return to the experience of Paul. We must supplement Jesus' experience of God with Paul's experience of Christ. A distinction ought to be carefully made at this point. The actual experience through which Paul passed and his interpretation of that experience are not at all the same. Something happened that changed him from a man whom the timid Christians feared to one whom they loved and trusted. That is the great fact that cannot be obscured. Such changes do not issue from anything less than a radical and transforming cause. Paul is perfectly clear concerning this. He declares that it was a real entrance of the Christ into his body so that he could honestly say that Christ dwelt within him. He was no longer the old Paul, controlled by his former will. He was a new man, impelled by new impulses and controlled by new motives. This is what he affirms repeatedly and to a similar experience he urges his friends.

The practical problem for the preacher is, Can living men and women be urged today to seek and to expect the same experience? If this is simply an interesting theological interpretation of something that happened to Paul centuries ago, then its meaning for

<sup>1</sup>*Christ and the World at War*, p. 35. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.



the modern preacher is practically nothing. If, on the other hand, this is an experience that was not unique in the case of Paul but may be expected to be repeated with anyone who makes a similar supreme surrender of will to Christ, then the preacher today has a definite message which he can give with conviction and courage.

We believe that Paul has explained his Christian experience in terms that were clear to his own mind and which, in spite of all the development in psychology that has taken place within the last half century, convey a sufficiently definite meaning to us. The preacher in this constructive age may declare that what happened in the case of Paul may transpire at this moment in the experience of anyone who relates himself in a similar way to Christ. *We do not need to experience Paul's theology; we need to experience Paul's experience.* The Christian preacher need have no hesitation in affirming that Christ still has the power to come into the life of anyone and make him a "new creation."

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON CHRIST

### SUGGESTION I

"I am the light of the world" (John 8:12).

#### THE LIGHT OF LIFE

Jesus used several figures to describe his character and mission: bread, vine, way, life, light. These are not definitions but clear and revealing descriptions. Develop the thought according to the nature of the physical figure.

- I. The light reveals. Every sunrise discovers a new world. It defines the relations and reveals the character of all objects. Thus Christ acts upon the soul.

- II. The light quickens. Life springs up when the sunlight comes. There is creative energy in it. Thus Christ touches the soul with new power.
- III. The light sustains. In quiet, ceaseless activity the sunlight sustains the world's life. It keeps up the processes that it starts. So Christ brings the soul on to perfection.

## SUGGESTION 2

"Ye call me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am" (John 13:13).

### OUR LORD AND MASTER

This presents Jesus' own claim for himself. Develop the thought under the two titles:

- I. Our Teacher. Life is a continuous task of learning how to live.
  - a) Knowing the truth. Jesus knows about God, man, and eternal life.
  - b) Competent to teach it. Keen sympathy. Wise method.
  - c) Exemplifying it personally. He lived what he taught.
- II. Our Lord. Religion roots in reverence. It calls for obedience.
  - a) Possessing authority. Jesus made supreme claims.
  - b) Conquering by love. Not by force.
  - c) Controlling by sacrifice. He gave himself.

## SUGGESTION 3

"Who went about doing good" (Acts 10:38).

### THE PERFECT LIFE

In concisest form and clearest terms the record of Jesus is given to us here in terms of human service.

- I. It was personal. He gave himself.
- II. It was wide in range. He went everywhere among the people.
- III. It was beneficent. He did no evil all his days.

SUGGESTION 4

"Let all the house of Israel therefore know assuredly, that God hath made this Jesus whom ye crucified both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36).

JESUS THE LORD

Note that this is one of the earliest statements of the essential Christian position. Jesus of Nazareth, the crucified Nazareth rabbi, is made the Lord and Messiah of the world. The text contains four items:

- I. Jesus was crucified.
- II. Jesus is Lord.
- III. God's will has wrought this.
- IV. The truth may be surely known.

SUGGESTION 5

"But all things are of God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and gave unto us the ministry of reconciliation; to wit, that God was in Christ reconciling the world unto himself" (II Cor. 5:18, 19).

FRIENDS ONCE MORE

Jesus is God's great, final appeal to us to make right the wrong relations between himself and his children caused by sin.

- I. We need to come back to the Father; the reconciliation is on man's part.
- II. The way to come back is through Christ.
- III. Having been made friends of God once more, we are to bring the great reconciliation to others.

SUGGESTION 6

"Abide in me, and I in you" (John 15:4).

THE HIGHEST UNITY

The text derives its meaning from the figure of the vine. Jesus speaks of himself as the vine (not the roots or the trunk but the *whole vine*) and of his disciples as the branches, organically

incorporated into the organism which is essentially himself. This suggests the following order:

- I. The unity of the organism.
- II. The variety of the organs.
- III. The flow of vital energies.
- IV. The attainment of the final purpose.

#### SUGGESTION 7

"I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me: and that life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith which is in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself up for me" (Gal. 2:20).

#### THE NEW LIFE

This is Paul's great expression of his own Christian experience. The following development of material is suggested:

- I. The Christian life is a life of faith.
- II. The object of that faith is the Christ.
- III. That life is essentially different from that which was lived without reference to Christ.
- IV. The essential factor of the new life is the resident, personal Christ.

#### SUGGESTION 8

"Wherefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature [or there is a new creation]; the old things are passed away; behold, they are become new" (II Cor. 5:7).

#### RENEWAL

- I. "In Christ." Study this familiar phrase in the letters of Paul. What does it mean? A personal friendship. Identity of motives and purposes. The residence of Christ in the soul.
- II. The loss of the old. Our former ideals and aims seem poor and weak when they are compared with Christ's.
- III. The gain of the new. The old does not perish in an instant entirely; it is changed and thus *becomes* new.

## SUGGESTION 9

"Till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a fullgrown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ" (Eph. 4:13).

## THE MEASURE OF MANHOOD

Define the stature of Christ as the goal of our human development:

- I. His physical strength. A body unbroken by a vice.
- II. His clear mind. Thinking about the deepest matters in life with unfailing insight and accuracy.
- III. His deep and rich emotions. Tender and sympathetic; never sentimental or maudlin.
- IV. His firm will. Making decisions and holding steadily to the choice of life's supreme task.
- V. His moral insight. Clean ethical discrimination and utter loyalty to conscience.
- VI. His spiritual vision and loyalty. Living so near to God that he never lost his sense of the Father's love and care.

## SUGGESTION 10

"Have this mind in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2:5).

## THE MASTER'S MOTIVES AND OUR MASTER-MOTIVE

Approach this subject from the standpoint of psychology. William James shows us that the motives from which we habitually act are the "hot place" in our consciousness. When those motives are religious we are religious. When our master-motives are those from which Jesus acted habitually we are in moral and spiritual union with him. When his ruling motives control us we become Christians. This is one of the ways in which he dwells in us and we abide in him. Therefore we need to understand:

- I. The ruling motives of Jesus.
- II. How to make them ours.
- III. The results of this union in motive with Christ.

## CHAPTER X

### SIN AND FORGIVENESS

As a result of the War the new world that is emerging must reckon with changed conceptions of sin that have come out of the experiences of the soldiers. Also there are new values imported into our thought of forgiveness, as we have been compelled to meet our enemies, both in individual and in national relations. Not only was the War itself the most colossal of crimes, but it has been conducted in such defiance of all that humanity had agreed upon as righteous and just that we are staggered by the definitions of evil and overwhelmed by the concrete expressions of wrong standards of action. So many of the old sins were small. The fearful butchery of innocent people in Belgium and Poland and Armenia; the piracy of the seas that sinks without trace; the "no prisoners" conduct of reprisals—the world never has seen anything like this before, so terrible and so colossal. It gives us a conception of gigantic sins which we never had appreciated. Sin had been in the world before, however. As has been said:

Probably the years of peace contained as much grotesque evil as the years of carnage. Cancer, consumption, to say nothing of syphilis, existed then; and the underworld was crawling with iniquities much more unlovely than the shattered forms of a battlefield. All that the war has done has been to make the problem of evil living to many minds that had hitherto known little of the more tragic aspects of life. We must not allow ourselves to imagine that our experiences of these past three years have



created any new difficulty for Christianity. They have only diffused the knowledge of their existence, and have given edge and point to them for us all.<sup>1</sup>

The preacher will hardly need to deal practically, however, with national responsibility for the sins of the War or its conduct. The average minister is quite powerless to control a situation involving nations at war. The moral standards of the smaller group, the community and neighborhood, and of the individual come more closely within the range of the preacher's task.

Let us look, therefore, at some of the changes that have taken place in the conception of sin within recent years, and particularly as a result of the Great War. Perhaps at no other single point does modern thought register a greater transformation. In the first place the preacher must reckon with the whole change that has taken place in our estimate of sin as a result of the social interpretation of Christianity. This is nothing less than revolutionary.

Professor Rauschenbusch has made this fact vivid by the story of the milkman, a member of a strict church, who was disciplined for having sworn a profane oath when he found that the health department of Toronto had spilled his product and marked his cans because the milk contained in them was foul. But the significance of this act on the part of the church lies in the grounds upon which it was based. The offender was put out of the synagogue,

not for introducing cow-dung into the intestines of babies, but for expressing his belief in the damnation of the wicked in a

<sup>1</sup> Maclean and Sclater, *God and the Soldier*, p. 18. Copyright (1918) by George H. Doran Co., publishers.

non-theological way. When his church will hereafter have digested the social gospel, it may treat the case this way: "Our brother was angry and used the name of God profanely in his anger; we urge him to settle this alone with God. But he has also defiled the milk supply by unclean methods. Having the life and health of young children in his keeping he has failed in his trust. Voted, that he be excluded until he has proved his lasting repentance." The result would be the same, but the sense of sin would do its work more intelligently.<sup>1</sup>

The significance of this practical situation has been realized by a relatively small number of the most far-sighted and courageous preachers of the immediate past. But it must break with full light across the path of every minister who is ready to bring his message to his generation with the full power with which it is now charged as a result of the War. It will require no less courage than has been shown by the brave heralds who have often been voices crying in the wilderness. The same old slogan, "Stick to the simple gospel," will be heard from the timid and the nearsighted. But at last the gospel is becoming really simple because it drives into the daily life and finds us in the world where we live.

From another point, also, we are approaching a revision of our moral standards. The soldiers have a contribution to make to the current ethical ideal. Their moral standards have been, of course, shaped to fit the conditions of war and may therefore be questioned on the ground that they will not be the permanent standards for a world at peace. Granting this fact, it still remains true that the Great War is sure to modify our ideas of Christian morality. Perhaps it will give us a

<sup>1</sup> *A Theology for the Social Gospel*, p. 35. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

new vision of what the moral life of the Christian ought to be.

A single quotation from the literature created in the trenches will serve to set forth the problem in its simplest terms:

I was in an officers' mess sometime ago, and they were discussing a new arrival. One of them said, "He is very quiet; he doesn't drink, doesn't smoke, doesn't play bridge, and doesn't swear." "He must be religious," concluded another. That is it. The words were not spoken in malice. It is the conception of a Christian that we have given them. If the new officer had been described as cheerful, generous, hospitable, and brave, they would not have concluded that he must be religious. Yet which description is the more like Christ? How brave, cheerful, generous, and hospitable Christ was! He was the soul of chivalry. No virtue had been associated with the new officer that a swindler and criminal might not possess, and yet he had been at once classified as a Christian. But men possessing the cardinal Christian virtues of charity, humility, joy, generosity, hospitality, hope, courage, and self-sacrifice are not classified as Christians, but merely as "good fellows." They are "white men." These "white men" may be in the church or out of it. There is, in the popular mind, no necessary connection. That is the tragedy of the church.<sup>1</sup>

In almost identical terms Donald Hankey describes the moral ideals and standards of the soldiers. He says:

Here were men who believed absolutely in the Christian virtues of unselfishness, generosity, charity, and humility, without ever connecting them in their minds with Christ; and at the same time what they did associate with Christianity was just on a par with the formalism and smug self-righteousness which Christ spent his whole life trying to destroy.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tiplady, *The Cross at the Front*, p. 94. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 1, pp. 108, 109. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

How clear it is that here we have a moral standard which is not only inadequate but wholly false. The standards of Jesus were not these superficial conventionalities. The problem of the moral standard was vividly presented early in the War in the letters from the soldiers. One of the most striking of these, which was widely quoted in America, was as follows:

The eccentricities of our chasseurs at Grenoble? Yes—I am aware of all this, yet they are good fellows. If they know how to fight, they also know how to amuse themselves, and, my Heavens, who should reproach them for this? Here, after our men have been a whole month in the trenches, when they go down to Plainfaing, they behave like sailors after a long voyage, "they go to extremes," bottles, cigars, gay songs—everything enters in. And their chief cannot deal severely with it; in fact, he should not do so. How little it matters if, after all these careless pranks, these poor devils can dash bravely forward and "over the top." It is superfluous to assure you that the follies of your nephew are of a very limited extent. A few extra glasses of old wine, some cigarettes, and, to be quite honest, some smiles for the young Alsatian girls, that's all. Do not fear the damnation of my soul.<sup>1</sup>

This letter is from that same young Jean Rival, who said so clearly, "I will die as a Christian and as a Frenchman."<sup>2</sup> It puts the soldier's sense of sin in clear light and forces some readjustments in our Puritan scale of values.

Then our own American boys went into the War and Christian workers went overseas to help them in their religious life. They also ran against a new set of con-

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Maurice Barrès, *The Faith of France*, p. 238. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> See p. 190.

ditions. The conventional Puritan standards, referred to by Tiplady and Hankey, were forced into strange adjustments. The matter is set forth by Fred B. Smith, the treasurer and general field secretary of the Y.M.C.A. War Work Council in France. The following quotation is from the *Literary Digest* of August 17, 1918:

Warning is given to congregations that they must be ready to mark the changes wrought in their pastors whom they have released for service "over there" and not be shocked thereby. For among the soldiers these men have found "the finest religious spirit you could imagine," but "no particular piety." Mr. Smith gives in the *New York Times Magazine* a concrete instance of the change thus wrought in the clergymen at the front:

"I remember particularly one preacher who came to France with the belief that he would save a lot of the soldiers from the tobacco evil. His personal feelings against tobacco were so strong that he felt himself unable to sell the weed in one of our canteens. This was not discovered until the clergyman had been put in charge of a hut immediately behind the lines.

"One night there was considerable infantry activity in this sector. At dawn the wailing cases among the wounded began returning to a rest station far behind the 'Y' hut. A party of twelve or thirteen under a sergeant stopt at the hut.

"The secretary-clergyman saw wounded men returning from the trenches for the first time. They said they were 'broke' and asked for chocolate. He gave it to them. He asked the men if they wanted anything else.

"The sergeant told him that the only other thing they needed was cigarets. They needed them badly. There was a supply in the hut. The antitobacco clergyman hesitated for about one-half second. Then his program for saving men from nicotine went by the board. He passed cigarets around to each of the wounded men. They departed for the rear.

"In a few minutes another group came along. They, too, needed something to smoke. Once more he abandoned his



principles. A third group appeared. Again the cigarets were distributed.

By this time the clergyman discovered that his supply of matches was practically exhausted. The fourth batch of visitors completely consumed it.

"For the rest of the day this crusader against tobacco found himself doing the only thing that would enable him to look his wounded countrymen in the eye as they stopt at the hut for rest. He kept a cigaret glowing in his own lips all day long so that each boy would be able to get a light!"

There is no man who speaks more by the book in reference to the judgment of young men, especially the American student body, than Fred B. Smith. For years he has been speaking to groups of men, holding personal interviews and entering into the confidences of young men in an unusual degree. He has written his impressions of the moral standards of our men at the front in the *American Magazine* for November, 1918, under the title "Four Sins That the Soldiers Say They Hate." First he makes this remark concerning the results of his experiences before the War:

Before the war, I often visited our universities as a Y.M.C.A. worker, and took advantage of this opportunity to question the students about their ideas of right and wrong. I found then that they had a fairly uniform code of morals. Over and over again, when asked what they considered the worst sin a man could be guilty of, they would give the same answer, "Immorality." After that they put drinking, gambling, dishonesty, and so on.

Apparently it was a universal standard, for, no matter where the test was made, the same things were put into the list and in the same relative positions.

When Mr. Smith went to France to work with the soldiers as he had done with all classes of men in America he decided to bring out their moral ideal by such a series



of questions as had yielded him such excellent results at home. He had no difficulty in securing the replies to his questions. They were given orally and in written form. But the results were surprising. The virtues and the vices that had been so easily defined at home were not at all the same as those which were stressed abroad. Mr. Smith extended the range of his inquiry; there was no change in the results. He took counsel with such men as Dr. John H. Finley, Judge Lindsey, and Raymond Fosdick. They agreed that the conclusions were valid and confirmed them by the judgment of the soldiers as expressed to them. Mr. Smith says:

All these tests, among widely separated groups, produced answers so nearly identical that it seems beyond question that we may take the result as the code of morals which our soldiers have set up for themselves.

Now, what is this code?

First—Courage.

Second—Unselfishness.

Third—Generosity.

Fourth—Modesty or humility.

These four qualities were put at the top by such an overwhelming majority that there was absolutely no question of their place there. And when we reversed the process and asked for the "meanest sins," the answers checked up the same. For the sins placed at the head of the list were:

First—Cowardice.

Second—Selfishness.

Third—Stinginess.

Fourth—Boastfulness.

Or, as the men put it, "being a blowhard."

Those were the things they most despised in others and most dreaded in themselves. Next to these came drunkenness and immorality, with a scattering of other things, like gambling, cruelty, profanity, and so on.

It seems strange to me now that, at first, I was a little disappointed. I had imagined they would name a sequence of vices led by immorality, tangible things you could get hold of and dramatize eloquently. This seemed a come-down to things that were vague and even trivial; a kind of hot milk diet which strong men would find very unsatisfying.

Mr. Smith did not stop with his sense of surprise and disappointment at what he had discovered. He is not that sort of a man anyway. In his article, therefore, he goes on to discuss at length the significance of this idea of sin called out by the War. We cannot follow this in detail, but the following paragraphs give the gist of his conclusions:

The more I thought about it, the more it seemed that these soldiers had gone down to bedrock. They had passed the superficial layer of what is merely legal or illegal, and had reached the things which are fundamental. And these qualities, these traces, which they have made the basis of their code, are fundamental not merely in their life as soldiers; they are just as truly the basis for all right living, anywhere and everywhere.

For, as I see it, immorality, drunkenness, and gambling cannot live side by side with courage, unselfishness, generosity, and humility. The more you study this set of standards your boys have placed before them, the more you will be amazed by the unerring way in which they have picked out the great essentials of character. War strips the veneer from life. And just because they are soldiers, these young men have instinctively let the surface things go, and have found the influences underneath which mold that surface.

At first glance one is oppressed by a certain sense of fear at the readjustment of moral values suggested above. Does this not mean that we shall undervalue certain most essential and sacred factors in the moral life? Surely profanity and sexual looseness and non-churchgoing

represent real evils, and the moral values that they stand for must be preserved. Therefore we are reluctant to see anything done that shall in any way displace them from the position which they always have held in our definition of the Christian moral standard.

There is no doubt that we ought to be jealous for the standards of the past. It is no light matter to modify them. But on the other hand change does not necessarily involve destruction, and we can afford to be most patient and tolerant of that which effects a shift for the better, even if some of the words which seemed sacred to us are no longer used in the new statement. There can be no doubt concerning the fact that the moral standards which the church has elevated into prominence have been too largely negative and superficial in their character. Tiplady puts this matter clearly:

Surely with our non-drinking, non-smoking, non-swearing, non-gambling, and our attendance at the church, we are but on the outskirts both of morals and religion! It is not what a man doesn't do that marks him off as a Christian. It is what he does and is. The Christian characteristics stand out plainly in the gospels. Love is the virtue of virtues. . . . The first test, therefore, of the Christian is, "Has he charity? Does he love?" It is also the first test of the Church.

I have lived five long years in the East End of London, and have walked by night and day through its miles of stinking streets where the poor are housed worse than the rich man's horses. The pale, thin faces of the children haunt me as the horrible sights on the Somme never will haunt me, for a ragged, starving child is more terrible to think of than a youth blown to fragments, or lying on a stretcher in mortal agony. The tragedy is deeper and more enduring.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tiplady, *The Cross at the Front*, pp. 96, 97. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

He also says:

Christian conduct must no longer be merely conventional. It must be creative. There is a call for spiritual daring and adventure. As St. Paul Christianized Greece and Rome, so we must Christianize industry and politics and abolish poverty and vice. To abstain from evil is not enough; we must adventure as Wesley, Dr. Barnardo, and Florence Nightingale adventured.<sup>1</sup>

Tiplady feels that we ought to have a new moral standard which shall bring into action the virtues of *chivalry*. This is what the soldiers at the Front had been displaying. They had dared to risk their lives for a Cause and to face peril of every kind in the endeavor to have justice and truth prevail in lands to which they were practical strangers. The title to the chapter in which Tiplady makes his appeal conveys the truth in brief terms, "The Chivalrous Religion Our Citizen Soldiers Will Require."

Sherwood Eddy reported the results of his observations among the soldiers in France and said that the moral standards obtaining in the trenches "are the sanctions of group morality. They [the soldiers] have very lax ideas about drunkenness and sexual irregularity, but they have very strict ideas about the sacredness of social obligations within the groups to which they belong."<sup>2</sup> Mr. Eddy finds that the virtues admired most by the soldiers are courage, brotherliness, loyalty, honesty, and cheerfulness. This brief quintet, while not comprehensive or final, is about the same in

<sup>1</sup> Tiplady, *The Cross at the Front*, p. 106. Copyright by Fleming H. Revell Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *With Our Soldiers in France*, p. 133. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

the minds of nearly all who have written on the moral standards of the trenches.

Raymond Fosdick wrote concerning the moral life of the soldiers:

I saw our troops storm Vaux on July 1; I saw the marines holding the lines at Château Thierry early in June, and I have seen the conditions under which our fellows habitually live in the trenches at the Front. Somehow, after what I have seen, I have not much patience with those people back home who fret about the morals of our Army. For in a big sense, our fellows are living on a plane such as men seldom attain. In point of devotion, unselfishness, cheer under hardship, a sense of honor, and a spirit of fortitude and courage, they make the people who piously condemn their morals back home look small and mean.

Even in the narrowest interpretation of the word, we have little cause to worry about the morals of our men. The official statistics show that the venereal-disease rate in the American Expeditionary Forces is less than 1 per cent. This is better than the conditions here in the camps at home, and it is infinitely smaller than the prevailing disease rate in the civilian population of the United States. As far as drunkenness is concerned, I saw thousands of American troops under all conditions, both at the Front and in the rear, and I did not see a single man intoxicated.

I do not want to give the impression that our men with the American Expeditionary Forces are saints—they are not. They are human fellows, and even when out of the trenches are living a life of which we Americans back home can well be proud. . . . The question is whether we are worthy of them.<sup>1</sup>

Donald Hankey was courageous enough to seek a general principle which might be followed in the effort to discover a moral standard for the Christian life which will inevitably emerge into being as a result of the War. He formulated his conclusion in these words:

We have got to follow what we think right quite recklessly, and leave the issue to God; and in judging between right and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in the *Literary Digest*, August 17, 1918.

wrong we are given only two rules for our guidance. Everything which shows love for God and love for man is right, and everything which shows personal ambition and anxiety is wrong.<sup>1</sup>

If the Great War has revealed the enormity<sup>2</sup> of sin it has also shown more clearly than we had recognized before in a long time the *responsibility* for it. In the presence of Belgium, Poland, and Armenia the moral sense of humanity says, "Someone is responsible for this." We had grown somewhat apologetic about our sins. When our ancestors and our environment and our misfortunes had been assigned the share of burden which we readily loaded upon them there was a most comfortably slight weight of responsibility left to weigh us down. But no thoughtful person can deal with the fact of responsibility so lightly any longer. Little boys with their hands cut off and young French girls with their babies force us to say as we never said before, "Someone is to blame for this and those who did it shall bear the burden of their wrongdoing." Now this is altogether to the advantage of clear and clean moral thinking. We are getting closer to the heart of God. We are locating the sanctions of morality where they belong, in the nature of God himself. The time has come to infuse fresh meaning into two texts: "For I am Jehovah your God . . . ye shall therefore be holy, for I am holy" (Lev. 11:44, 45); "Ye therefore shall be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect" (Matt. 5:48).

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 2, p. 170. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> A French officer said to Kipling, "The boche is saving the world because he has shown what evil is."



Here is a double text for a sermon on "The Warrant for Righteousness." It gives the preacher the opportunity to lay the foundations of such a new sense of moral obligation and responsibility as will stiffen up the whole life of the church and the community. Just this plunge of practical application would not have been possible without the situation created by the Great War.

What is the Christian preacher to do as he attempts to set forth the standard of morality which the church is surely formulating under the influence of the social gospel and the chivalry of the Great War?

He will turn first of all with fresh joy and satisfaction to the teaching of the prophets and of Jesus. Both are in perfect accord in their break with the external and conventional standards of morality that tend in every age to become artificial and false. Jesus and the prophets laid their emphasis upon motives instead of conventionalities. They pierced to the heart of conduct and insisted upon the positive virtues. Under the stress of this new conception we shall do the same. This will not afford any warrant for profanity or gambling or social vices; it will not cease to place moral value on personal habits that may have been justified by the stress of war but are not permanently justified by the conditions of ordinary life. We shall, however, preach concerning the great positive and chivalric virtues as never before, with clearness and confidence.

Forgiveness will be seen to have a social value. The purpose in pardon is redemptive and restorative. Forgiven sinners are not only to "go and sin no more," but they are to fill their pardoned lives with positive good.

They are to be the agents of a new redemption, for they have been lost and were found. Then forgiveness will not seem to be a sort of grandmotherly indulgence on the part of God. It will have ethical significance brought into it. It will serve a purpose in the economy of the age that is to be re-made. Those who will bring in the new era will be not only the victors who made it possible, but the restored penitents who have learned through blood and tears not only that the wages of sin is death, but also that we are forgiven in order that we may serve and bless.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON SIN AND FORGIVENESS

### SUGGESTION I

"For my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water" (Jer. 2:13).

### THE FOLLY OF SIN

Study first the figure of the water as it represents God's relation to the soul. The water is vitally necessary; it brings resources for life; it cools and comforts and refreshes.

- I. Forsaking the living spring. Sin is separation from God and goodness. It puts self in the place of the Creator.
- II. Hewing out the leaking cistern. "It is hard work to be tough." And when we have learned, the job is unsatisfactory. The cistern leaks.

### SUGGESTION 2

"For the prince of the world cometh: and he hath nothing in me" (John 14:30).

### IMMUNE

The "prince of the world" stands for evil in every form. It is everywhere. How may it be successfully met and overcome?

- I. Not by denial or escape. Whatever our theory may be, in practical experience we must face sin as a reality.
- II. Not wholly by active struggle. We must fight sin in open battle. But the enemy is too strong for us alone.
- III. By becoming immune to sin as Jesus was. There was no ground for the evil to root and grow in the soil of his soul.
- IV. Identify our purposes with those of Jesus in order that we may be free from sin as he was.

### SUGGESTION 3

“A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump” (Gal. 5:9).

#### BE CAREFUL!

This text is like a sign placed near a dangerous curve or crossing. It tells us to beware the contagious danger that lies in little sins.

- I. The apparent insignificance of the yeast in comparison with the whole lump of dough.
- II. The energies in the yeast; indefinite multiplication.
- III. Contact necessary to contagion.
- IV. The result: the lump permeated and transformed. Be careful!

### SUGGESTION 4

“Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye tithe mint and anise and cummin, and have left undone the weightier matters of the law, justice, and mercy, and faith: but these ye ought to have done, and not to have left the other undone” (Matt. 23:23).

#### LITTLE VIRTUES AND BIG SINS

Perhaps a more concise text would be vs. 24, “Ye blind guides, that strain out the gnat, and swallow the camel.” If this is used, note the graphic explanation of it given in *The Jesus of History* by T. R. Glover (p. 48):

Then he [the Pharisee] sets about straining what he is going to drink —another elaborate process; he holds a piece of muslin over the cup and

pours with care; he pauses—he sees a mosquito; he has caught it in time and flicks it away; he is safe and he will not swallow it. And then, adds Jesus, he swallowed a camel. How many of us have ever pictured the process, and the series of sensations, as the long hairy neck slid down the throat of the Pharisee—all that amplitude of loose-hung anatomy—the hump—two humps—both of them slid down—and he never noticed—and the legs—all of them—with whole outfit of knees and big padded feet. The Pharisee swallowed a camel and never noticed it. . . . A modern teacher would have said, in our jargon, that the Pharisee had no sense of proportion—and no one would have thought the remark worth remembering.

In developing the subject we discuss two divisions:

- I. The accidental virtues, which we ought not to leave undone.
- II. The essential virtues, which we must not fail to do.

#### SUGGESTION 5

“Evil shall slay the wicked” (Ps. 34:21).

#### SIN’S SUPREME ENEMY

Begin the discussion with such a familiar proverb as, “The destruction of the poor is their poverty.”

##### I. External opposition to sin.

- a) Sin must be fought. Our life is an inevitable combat between good and evil. Moral passiveness or neutrality is impossible.
- b) This struggle is long and costly. In the end goodness is triumphant because it is good.
- c) There is a great ally for the external forces that are fighting evil; it is the self-destructive energy in sin itself.

##### II. Internal self-destructive energies of sin.

- a) Illustrations: intemperance, alcohol finally destroys its victims; lying, the liar is finally hanged with his own rope; selfishness, the selfish man may save his body but he loses his soul.
- b) These energies are silent, constantly at work, deadly in effect.

- c) Therefore ally your positive opposition to sin with the inner destructive agencies of evil, and be sure of the victory of goodness.

#### SUGGESTION 6

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap" (Gal. 6:7).

#### HARVESTERS

This is a straight sermon on "wild oats."

- I. Sowing the seed.
- II. The growing process.
- III. The crop.
- IV. The end.

The moral experience of American fighting forces will give fresh material on this subject.

Turning specifically to the "sins that the soldiers hate," as Mr. Smith has defined them, a preacher will discover at once that they are timely in civilian life as well as among the fighting forces. Also, it is undoubtedly best to preach on the corresponding virtues rather than the vices. These virtues are courage, unselfishness, generosity, and modesty. The following notes refer to these four subjects in either their positive or negative aspects.

#### SUGGESTION 7

"A cheerful heart is a good medicine;  
But a broken spirit drieth up the bones" (Prov. 17:22).

#### GOOD MEDICINE<sup>1</sup>

Introduce this by a study of the factors that produce morale, showing the place of courage and good cheer among them.

- I. The sources of courage.
- II. The culture of courage.
- III. The blessings of courage.

<sup>1</sup> Other suggestions concerning courage are found on pp. 29-33.

### SUGGESTION 8

"Woe to him that is alone when he falleth, and hath not another to lift him up" (Eccles. 4:10).

#### FALLEN IN NO MAN'S LAND

Introduce the discussion by any of the familiar incidents concerning the relief or rescue of wounded men in No Man's Land during the War.

- I. The loss and despair of loneliness.
- II. The joy and reward of comradeship.
- III. Wounded men in the No Man's Land of industrial and social life.
- IV. Where and how we can help.

### SUGGESTION 9

"He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it" (Matt. 10:39).

#### LIFE THAT IS LOST AND FOUND

The apparent contradiction of the text and its real consistency.

- I. Life is enriched in order that it may be expended.
- II. Expenditure of life is the only sure way of its enrichment.
- III. The blessed reaction of the two principles in experience.

### SUGGESTION 10

"Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives unto the death,

And Naphtali, upon the high places of the field" (Judg. 5:18).

#### UNRECKONING LOYALTY

The call of duty demands that men respond with a reckless loyalty, jeopardizing their lives if necessary.

- I. Calculating and prudential service.
- II. The cost of full loyalty: death and the high places of the battlefield.
- III. True loyalty dares all this and pays the price.



## SUGGESTION 11

"But I hold not my life of any account as dear unto myself, in comparison of accomplishing my course" (Acts 20:24 [margin]).

## THE COST OF DUTY

- I. To do one's duty is the supreme engagement of life.
- II. Physical existence is not so important as the doing of God's will.
- III. The lesser good of living must not be held at the cost of the higher good of doing God's will.

## SUGGESTION 12

"There is that scattereth and increaseth yet more;  
And there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it  
tendeth only to want" (Prov. 11:24).

## THE DIVIDED BLANKET

Fred B. Smith quotes a soldier in one of his meetings where the matter of sin was being discussed as placing unselfishness at the head of the list of virtues, and illustrating his contention by the following incident:

Well, when we were going in the other night, on our way to the trenches, I forgot my blanket. It was darned cold, too. You fellows know that. And it looked to me like I was going to freeze, out there. But when my pal found out the fix I was in, instead of guying me for being such a fool as to forget my stuff, he took out his knife and cut his own blanket in two and gave me half of it. I don't know whether that's what the preachers would call being good—but it's good enough for me!

This suggests the title above.

- I. It is cold in No Man's Land.
- II. Some men have forgotten their blankets.
- III. Other men have blankets.
- IV. What are you doing with your blanket?

## SUGGESTION 13

"Let not him that girdeth on his armor boast himself as he that putteth it off" (I Kings 20:11).

THE TIME TO BOAST

- I. The tendency to boast when putting on the armor.
- II. The test of courage while under arms.
- III. The time to boast would be when the armor is put off; but the true soldier does not boast at all.

SUGGESTION 14

“So the tongue also is a little member, and boasteth great things” (Jas. 3:5).

THE GREAT LITTLE BRAGGART

- I. How easily we boast.
- II. The folly of boasting.
- III. The positive mischief of boasting.
- IV. How to curb our tendency to boast: by discipline from others; by self-control.

## CHAPTER XI

### DEATH, COMFORT, AND IMMORTALITY

The Christian preacher always has been a messenger of comfort and hope to souls who must sometime inevitably face disappointment, suffering, and death as a part of mortal life. The Christian message on these points always has been clear. Jesus defined it; the Christian theology has formulated it; Christian preachers have declared it; pastors have employed it in active ministry. Thus in homes, in hospitals, and beside countless open graves the Christian assurance has brought hope and help to wounded hearts.

Then came the Great War. At first the stories of disaster and death came faintly to us. Even with the speed of modern communication France was still far away. But steadily the matter grew more personal. The more adventurous spirits that had joined the fighting forces suffered the inevitable losses that come with warfare. Then our own part became definite and the hazard grew. Then the first casualty lists appeared in the press. Suffering and death in unprecedented proportions and in forms more cruel than nature ever wrought in her most cruel moods fell to our lot also. The burdened cables seemed almost to have sobbed beneath the sea. The letters and diaries of the soldiers brought the whole terrible business home. These men were having such first-hand dealing with death and pain as secure civilians could not understand. The veil

of mystery and fearsomeness was stripped off the subject and a revealing radiance lay over it.

These letters have been marked by a fine reserve. The soldiers do not babble about death or speak of it with flippancy or sentimentalism. They recognize its constant presence, accept the fact cheerfully, and speak of it freely as "to go West."

Donald Hankey writes:

Personally, I believe that very few men indeed fear death. The vast majority experience a more or less violent shrinking from the pain of death and wounds, especially when they are obliged to be physically inactive, and when they have nothing else to think about. This . . . is a purely physical reaction which can be, and nearly always is, controlled by the mind.<sup>1</sup>

Coningsby Dawson puts the soldiers' point of view in these words:

Alive or "gone West" I shall never be far from you; you may depend on that—and I shall always hope to feel you brave and happy.

And yet, so strange a havoc does this war work that, if I have to "go West" I shall go *proudly* and quietly. I have seen too many men die bravely to make a fuss if my turn comes.<sup>2</sup>

As we read the letters of the soldiers we cannot fail to be impressed by the frankness and fearlessness with which they face the supreme issue. Many pages of quotations might be given. The following are only a few, but they are typical of what the soldiers have uniformly written about death.

<sup>1</sup> *A Student in Arms*, Series 2, p. 121. Copyright by E. P. Dutton & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Carry On*, pp. 80, 85. Copyright by John Lane Co.

The first illustration comes from a young Italian soldier whose letters have been published in part. The editor says:

Before departing for the front, Enzo Valentini made his will and testament, to be opened only in the case of his death, the last poetic words of which are: "Be strong, little mother. From beyond he sends to you his farewell, to papa, to his brothers, to all who have loved him—your son who has given his body to fight against those who would kill the light."<sup>1</sup>

The following is an extract from another letter of the same soldier:

Try, if you can, not to weep for me too much. Think that even if I do not return, I am not for that reason dead. It, my body, the inferior part of me, may suffer and die, but not I. I, the soul, cannot die, because I come from God and must return to God. I was born for happiness, and through the happiness that is at the bottom of all suffering, I am to return into everlasting joy. If at times I have been the prisoner of my body, it has not been for always. My death is a liberation, the beginning of the true life, the return to the Infinite. Therefore, do not weep for me. If you think of the immortal beauty of the Ideas for which my soul has desired to sacrifice my body, you will not weep. But if your mother's heart mourns, let the tears flow. They will always be sacred, the tears of a mother. May God keep count of them; they will be the stars of her crown.<sup>2</sup>

In another volume we find the following words:

What are our lives worth when we think of the years of happiness and peace of those who will follow us and those who may survive us. We labor for to-morrow, in order that there may be no more wars, no more spilling of blood, no more killing, no more wounded, no more mutilated victims; we labor, we whom

<sup>1</sup> N. P. Dawson, *The Good Soldier* (1918), p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> From a letter of Enzo Valentini, of Perugia, quoted in *The Good Soldier*, p. 4.

our mothers will so weep for, in order that other mamas may never know these bitter tears. In truth, when one thinks of the centuries that this peace will last, one is ashamed of the rebellious movements which the flesh is guilty of at certain moments at the thought of death.<sup>1</sup>

We quote but one more extract, this from the letters of a young poet who had made himself an honored name by his writings before his death in the Great War:

Death is nothing terrible after all. It may mean something more wonderful than life. It cannot possibly mean anything worse to the good soldier. So do not be unhappy but no matter what happens walk with your head high and glory in your large share of whatever credit the world may give me.<sup>2</sup>

This manly and fearless attitude of mind on the part of the men who were actually face to face with death must effect a transformation in the manner in which the fact will be treated in the pulpit. Death will never again be used as a nursemaid's bogey to frighten reluctant sinners to the mourner's bench. The ancient "deathbed" illustrations and threats of sudden loss of life had well-nigh vanished from the preaching of the most intelligent churches; but they still prevailed among the more emotional types of religious expression and were used by the evangelists to quicken the tread of penitents along the sawdust trail. But now they surely are gone, never to return. Death has been given a noble dignity and will be accepted as an essential factor in life, not to be kept veiled under a fair name or feared like a ghost expected to walk in gruesome suddenness

<sup>1</sup> Captain André Cornet-Auquier, *A Soldier Unafraid*, p. 30. Copyright by Little, Brown & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> "Letters and Diary of Alan Seeger," quoted in *The Good Soldier*, p. 69.



out of a dark corner, but rather to be incorporated into a fearless and useful life,

Life that shall send  
A challenge to its end,  
And, when it comes, say, Welcome, Friend.

Turning now to the interpretations of the fact of suffering and death which have been published, we are impressed by the number and character of the voices that have spoken. They range from the notes of denial to the "demonstrations" of personal immortality by the disciples of spiritism.

Mr. Galsworthy says: "Not one Englishman in ten now really believes that he is going to live again." He also says, concerning the French soldiers: "The *poilu* has no faith at all now, if he ever had, save faith in his country." Mr. Wells refuses to discuss the matter at all, saying: "The reality of religion is our self-identification with God . . . and the achievement of his kingdom, in our hearts and in the world. Whether we live forever or die tomorrow does not affect righteousness."<sup>1</sup>

Winifred Kirkland disposes of Galsworthy's superficial judgment in a single stinging sentence:

One wonders if it is conceivable that Mr. Galsworthy has read the many brief, immortal credos of the many Englishmen who have left us their breathless, blotted memoirs of the trenches, or has been deaf to the triumph songs of parents who have survived them, or that he can fail to have been stirred by the flaming faith of the young soldiers of France.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *God the Invisible King*, p. xix. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *The New Death*, p. 7. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

It is an ungracious act to call a distinguished man an ignoramus; but it is effectively done here according to the merits of the case.

Turning to the discussions of death and immortality, the preacher will find Harry Emerson Fosdick's *Assurance of Immortality* a satisfying statement. He does not base the confidence in immortal life upon the teaching or resurrection of Jesus, as the Christian apologetic has so often done. He shows that our faith in the life immortal is grounded in: (1) the scientific affirmation that the universe is reasonable; (2) the religious faith that the universe is friendly; (3) the indorsement of the world's spiritual seers; (4) the voice of our own noblest moods and moments; (5) the value of the truth for daily living.

Perhaps the most significant recent American discussion of the subject is *The New Death* by Winifred Kirkland. This appeared first as an essay in the *Atlantic Monthly* and was later elaborated and published in book form. Certain points made by the author are significant for the modern preacher's work. The discussion is carried on quite independently of any scientific or religious considerations; nor does it deal with theories concerning immortality. The point of view is presented in the following paragraphs:

"A study of the New Death cannot too often emphasize the point that it is not a study of abstract truth about death, but a study of the fact that myriads of people are to-day ordering their lives on the hypothesis of immortality."<sup>1</sup>

"Not for a century has interest in the great themes of death, immortality, and the life everlasting been so widespread and so

<sup>1</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 21. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

profound. The war has made a new heaven, let us trust that it may aid in making a new earth."<sup>1</sup>

This new conception differs in at least three respects from the current ideas concerning immortality which have obtained in the past.

First, it is not something reached by the moral and intellectual leaders of the people and handed down to them by their teachers and guides. On the contrary, the millions who hold it have not looked either to the scientists or the theologians for leadership in this matter. They have shaped their own faith and made their own affirmations. The new idea of death is popular.

"It is not always that the popular mind moves in advance of accredited intellectual leaders, but it appears that to-day the common people have become their own prophets, that a belief in personal survival is becoming so strong an influence in thousands of humble and bereaved homes that it would seem as if novelists and psychologists should reckon with it as an important phase of the contemporary, however little they accept it as a philosophy for themselves."<sup>2</sup>

"The New Death, now entering history as an influence . . . is a great intuition entering into the lives of the simple, the sort of people who have made the past and will make the future. It does not matter in the least whether or not the intellectuals share this intuition; . . . what matters is the effect upon emergent public life and private of the fact that everyday men and women are believing the dead live."<sup>3</sup>

Again, this new idea of death and immortality is an *intuition*, as indicated in the paragraph last quoted. The common people who hold it so widely and so steadfastly have not reached their conclusions through processes of reason. Nor do they rely upon proofs of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.* p. 9.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

the ordinary kind for the validating of their convictions. They put it in such a simple proposition as this: "No science can convince us that we have not a soul when we feel it suffer so."<sup>1</sup>

Finally, this new conception of death influences practically the conduct of living men and women. We remember the dismay with which we read the conclusions of Dr. Osler, to the effect that whatever men and women believed about immortality, they lived and died uninfluenced by their doctrine. Now according to this student of the matter, it is quite otherwise. The idea *works*.

"That our dead are alive and the same that we loved, and that they joyously continue the upward march, is the dominating faith of the New Death. There is in this creed nothing new, except the incalculable novelty that never before did so many people evolve it, each for himself, and never before did so many people practice it as the deepest inspiration of their daily conduct."<sup>2</sup>

"There is nothing new about immortality, there is nothing new about God; there is everything new in the fact that we are at last willing to live as if we believed in both. This is the religion of the New Death."<sup>3</sup>

This study of the subject ought to be seriously reckoned with by any preacher who seeks to bring the comfort of the gospel to those who are suffering from the death of their dearest in the Great War.

A problem forced to the center of our thinking by the present situation is the "salvation" of soldiers who have fallen in action. There are two judgments on the matter. One is voiced by Cardinal Mercier in the

<sup>1</sup> Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 18. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 85.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 95.

famous pastoral, "Patriotism and Endurance," of Christmas, 1914. He wrote:

I was asked lately by a staff officer whether a soldier falling in a righteous cause—and our cause is such, to demonstration—is not veritably a martyr. Well, he is not a martyr in the rigorous theological meaning of the word, inasmuch as he dies in arms, whereas the martyr delivers himself, undefended and unarmed, into the hands of the executioner. But if I am asked what I think of the eternal salvation of a brave man who has conscientiously given his life in defence of his country's honor, and in vindication of violated justice, I shall not hesitate to reply that without any doubt whatever Christ crowns his military valor, and that death, accepted in this Christian spirit, assures the safety of that man's soul. "Greater love than this no man hath," said Our Saviour, "that a man lay down his life for his friends." And the soldier who dies to save his brothers, and to defend the hearths and altars of his country, reaches this highest of all degrees of charity. He may not have made a close analysis of the value of his sacrifice; but must we suppose that God requires of the plain soldier in the excitement of battle the methodical precision of the moralist or the theologian? Can we who revere his heroism doubt that his God welcomes him with love?

This is put still more clearly in the words which a priest, serving in the armies of France, is reported to have used constantly in his addresses to the soldiers: "Tell each one of your men that he who dies in honor on the field is sure of going straight to heaven."<sup>1</sup>

Another expression of this idea may be found in the signed editorial of E. S. M[artin] in *Life* (August 15, 1918), the concluding paragraphs of which read as follows:

We speak of the dead in the casualty lists as having "lost their lives," but do we think so?

<sup>1</sup> Barrès, *The Faith of France*, p. 38. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

The deeper we get into the war the less we shall think so; the more most of us will feel that our dead have not lost their lives, but quite the contrary.

That feeling is one of the great things that the war is bringing to pass. For four years the war has kept before Belgium and France and Britain the proposition that there are things that are worth more than life.' To that suggestion the people of those countries, and later the Italians, have steadfastly assented. Now it comes our turn, and we shall give the same testimony.

Behind so much unanimity must be a silent confidence that lives given in a great cause are not lost, not extinguished, but persist, unchanged except for better, in personality.

That is the great consolation for the readers of the casualty lists.

On the other hand it is reported that Rev. Mark Matthews of Seattle, preaching in the Fifth Avenue Presbyterian Church in New York in August, 1918, was greeted with applause (said to have been extended by visitors and not by the regular attendants) when he affirmed: "Hard as it may be, the impenitent American boy, in uniform, killed in battle, dies in his sins and is lost. I honor him as far as it is possible. I wish he had repented and accepted Christ. But he had his chance."

This is the other side of the matter. Preachers who are ministering to the parents of soldiers who have died in battle will do some earnest thinking before they are willing to occupy either position. How does anyone know whether the soldier in uniform killed in battle has "repented and accepted Christ" or not? "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." When an American boy gives his life for the cause of freedom and makes the supreme sacrifice in order that all boys who live after him may be free



from the peril that has cost him this sacrifice, does he have to be a member of a church in order to assure us that he has "accepted Christ"?

Passing now to the task of preaching on these subjects, this question is pertinent: How far shall a minister seek in his preaching to justify God or to furnish a theodicy for the people? Some men make the attempt. This is most unwise. It is not possible to explain the strange ways of God. We may fully believe that there is reason as well as love behind the events that issue in the death of a kinsman or comrade. But to prove it is most difficult. We can understand the words that Professor George Herbert Palmer of Harvard wrote concerning the death of his wife: "Though no regrets are proper for the manner of her death, who can contemplate the fact of it and not call the world irrational, if out of deference to a few particles of disordered matter it excludes so fair a spirit?"<sup>1</sup>

The only safe attitude of the minister as he seeks to bring comfort to troubled hearts is to stand humbly and reverently in the presence of the experiences that come and say that the judgments of the Lord "are true and righteous altogether."

We have to make our appeal to faith and the future. As Fosdick says: "It is entirely possible that the incidental evils of a process, leading toward a worthy consummation, may be explicable when the process is complete."<sup>2</sup> The present woes of life are inexplicable; but the results will doubtless vindicate the love and wisdom of the hard and mysterious process, as the

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Fosdick, *Assurance of Immortality*, p. 12.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 123.

finished vase justifies the potter's firm touch and the biting furnace flame.

The question arises inevitably at the conclusion of this discussion, What weight is to be given to the life and words of Jesus in giving the wistful world a satisfying message concerning the life immortal? Did not the experience of Jesus with death lay the grounds of assurance of immortality beyond all question?

Dr. Fosdick apprehends the tendency of the hour, doubtless with his usual accuracy of insight, when he does not make the experience of Jesus the chief warrant for the assurance of immortality. To many minds this is probably not a convincing argument. But we believe that there is more force in it than at first appears. Granting considerable difference of opinion concerning the physical resurrection of the body of Jesus, there must be general agreement from a fair reading of the New Testament and of the following Christian history that the spirit of Jesus was not extinguished by death. He lived and loved and accomplished specific deeds. This truth can be made the basis of Christian preaching with new freedom. Our confidence in the life immortal rests on many grounds; but one of the chief of these is the fact that Jesus Christ is alive again forevermore and because he lives we shall live also.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON DEATH AND IMMORTALITY

### SUGGESTION I

"For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known" (I Cor. 13:12).

## WITH PERFECT VISION

Such a text needs illustration. Naturally the thought of the "steamed" mirror will come at once to mind; when the moisture is rubbed away we can use the mirror. Or the corroded mirrors that have been found in the ruins of Roman cities and may be seen in museums may be used to explain the text. Their silvered and polished surfaces are useless now; they must be burnished once more. But in any condition, the mirror does not give us the satisfaction of the look into the eyes of our dear ones "face to face." That is the final revelation; and in the days of sorrow we must look ahead to the life eternal for this revelation.

Another illustration comes from a recent book, the work of a great preacher, and is so clear that it is worth exact quotation:

I have in my mind's eye a little Parable of Consolation. It consists of an old book-marker, once belonging to my dear mother, and very precious now to her son. A text is worked on it, in blue silk on the pierced card. A few years ago I found it in a book, after having long lost sight of it. I saw first its "wrong side"; and that was just an unmeaning tangle of confused and crossing threads. Then I turned it round. On the "right side," in beautiful clear letters, *produced by the tangled stitches*, I read these three deep, glorious, eternal words, "God is Love."

Was it not a parable? Here on earth we see the "wrong side" of the Great Consoler's work. There, above, we shall read the "right side," in the very light of Heaven. We shall understand then that the right side *was worked out through the wrong side*. Our sorrows, your sorrows, were the tangled stitches, and all the while they were "working out the weight of glory," the glory of *seeing* at last, "with open face," that God is Love.

Just seven years ago, February 21, 1909, I took that dear book-marker up into a pulpit, and let it preach a sermon to stricken hearts. At West Stanley, in County Durham, an awful pit disaster had occurred; one hundred and sixty-nine men and lads had died together of that explosion. On the Sunday evening following I preached there, to a church quite full of mourners. I held up my mother's card to them, and pointed out its message of faith and hope. And I happen to know that the old book-marker brought more light and help to the mourners that night than all the rest of my sermon put together.<sup>1</sup>

The card to which Bishop Moule refers was photographed and reproduced on the inside covers of the little book from which the

<sup>1</sup> H. C. G. Moule, *Christ and Sorrow*, p. 66.

foregoing quotation is made. It is a telling illustration of the text and truth for which he used it. Without the object itself it would be impossible to employ this illustration so effectively; but with clear and vivid description it may be done. These old texts and mottoes worked with silk or worsted on pierced cardboard will be remembered by all the older members of a congregation. Thus the little "Parable of Consolation" may again become a source of comfort and courage.

#### SUGGESTION 2

"A voice is heard in Ramah, lamentation, and bitter weeping, Rachel weeping for her children; she refuseth to be comforted because they are not."

"Refrain thy voice from weeping, and thine eyes from tears; for thy work shall be regarded, saith Jehovah; and they shall come again from the land of the enemy" (Jer. 31:15, 16).

#### BLESSINGS FROM SACRIFICE

- I. The fact of sorrow and death. It cannot be banished from a mortal world. Women's eyes are red with weeping for their children "are not." This cannot be denied.
- II. The comfort of God. One's own resolution can do something; one's friends can do more; God can do most. Sorrowing souls must listen to God.
- III. The rewards are sure. No great sacrifice can be made without a final blessing coming from it. Our great task, that has cost blood and treasure for America, will sometime bless the world.
- IV. Our lost ones shall return, not in physical presence, but in spiritual fruitage, ennobling us, enriching the nation, bringing honor to God.

#### SUGGESTION 3

"Redeem Israel, O God,  
Out of all his troubles" (Ps. 25:22).

#### A PRAYER FOR HELP

- I. Israel is in trouble.
- II. Israel cannot escape alone.
- III. God can help Israel.

## SUGGESTION 4

"And he said, While the child was yet alive I fasted and wept: for I said, Who knoweth whether Jehovah will not be gracious unto me, that the child may live? But now he is dead, wherefore should I fast? can I bring him back again? I shall go to him, but he will not return to me" (II Sam. 12:22, 23).

## BEACONING SOULS

- I. Our service to the living. The joy and sacrifice of caring for those whom we love.
- II. Our loss and loneliness in the death of loved ones. They cannot return to us.
- III. Our blessed anticipation. They are beacon lights to us in the darkness of the years.

## SUGGESTION 5

"And might deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage" (Heb. 2:15).

## FEAR'S FETTERS BROKEN

- I. The fear of death. A fact, apparent from the most ignorant savage to the majority of cultivated men.
- II. Efforts to break the bondage of this fear. Reason has spoken, as in the Dialogues of Plato. Nature has been used as a symbol: the wheat and the butterfly. Art has interpreted the experience in terms of hope.
- III. The Christian message. Christ has conquered death, not by driving it out of human experience, but by showing how it is to be made the means to a nobler life here and an immortal life hereafter.

## SUGGESTION 6

"Jehovah gave, and Jehovah hath taken away; blessed be the name of Jehovah" (Job. 1:21).

## HIS WILL IS OUR PEACE

- I. God is the giver of all good. We go on our way carelessly and forget to thank him. We even dishonor his gifts. A sense of their source ought to make us more careful in our use of our powers and opportunities.

- II. God's will permits our possessions to be taken away. The cause is often our own fault. God permits our loss, however. This is a hard doctrine to confess or to understand.
- III. The source of our peace is the sense of God's will. Thousands of Christian soldiers have repeated this old faith of Job in their letters. How to make our sense of God's will real in everyday life.

#### SUGGESTION 7

"Death is swallowed up in victory" (I Cor. 15:54).

#### THE FINAL TRIUMPH

- I. Death is apparent defeat for the highest purposes and noblest efforts in life. It takes the young, the strong, and the useful without discrimination. It takes the statesman and leaves the idiot. Is there anything that can conquer this apparently universal Conqueror?
- II. Death may be conquered in the following ways:
  - a) The victory of clear and honest thinking. When we really think the matter through we cannot rest in the idea that death is the end.
  - b) The victory of love. Our affections tell us that death cannot stop the soul. Love that can suffer and achieve so much cannot be obliterated.
  - c) The victory of faith. We dare to believe when we cannot prove. In the face of all doubt there is something within us that still believes. Trust it.
  - d) The victory of Christ. Once it was proved that the soul must live beyond death. We can build our confidence on what took place in the experience of Jesus.



## CHAPTER XII

### PRAYER

The Great War has thrown into new prominence and perplexity the theory and the practice of prayer. Here were millions of people engaged in deadly strife; they were praying to the same God; the prayers of both could not be answered; is not prayer, then, a hollow form and an idle mockery? Millions of prayers were offered that the War might not come; more millions were offered that the War might cease. But the War came and the War continued. How, then, shall a thoughtful man regard the worth of prayer? The people are still asking this question; the preachers must answer it; and before any attempt at an answer is made a minister must go over the familiar ground again in order to gain new warrants for his personal faith and his public message.

What added light has the Great War thrown upon the subject and the practice of prayer? The letters of the soldiers and the reports of chaplains are of great interest and value on this point. One of the most simple and genuine references to prayer is found in the letters of Edwin Austin Abbey II.

You are praying not just for me, but for all of us out here, and the German soldiers too. I often think of you at early mass and in "St. Saviour's," and so many other times of the day, praying. That is the great thing, for it all lies with God, and in His own way He always answers prayers; so when I think that you and father and Father W—— and Father S—— and so many others are

praying, it is a great comfort and strength. When I am under fire I pray not only for protection, or a worthy dying, but for courage, not to lose my control and to help others.<sup>1</sup>

Perhaps the best way in which to define a theory is to study the practical life which the theory calls forth. Here is a certain report on the practice of prayer, in which at least the following factors appear:

Prayer is a social matter. Many are engaged in it. Parents, religious teachers, and the young man himself are united in the bonds of a fellowship which is unified by the common practice of prayer.

Prayer is an encouragement. The young soldier finds real help from his knowledge that his circle of friends are engaged in prayer for him. He may not define the reasons, but he feels the influence and it stands by him in his hours of peril and waiting.

Prayer is for definite objects. The young soldier asks for what he needs personally to meet the situation in which he is immediately found. The petition of the lad in the trenches is clear and specific.

Prayer is marked by trust in the wisdom and goodness of God. It does not insist upon any certain answer; but it is confident that some answer will be given. When this comes it will be the answer that is best, because it is according to the will of the good Father. This aspect of prayer finds expression in the letter of another soldier, which contains the following paragraph:

Of course I have no objection to your teaching Vallie a prayer, —why should I have? Only please teach him one thing: that

<sup>1</sup> "A Gentleman Unafraid," in *Atlantic Monthly* (April, 1918), p. 462. This letter was to his mother, dated April 18, 1916.

his prayer may not be answered, and that if it isn't, he must not think God cruel or unmindful. "Thy will be done" is the safety-valve in all prayer, and believers in God must surely think—if they do not say—those words as a part of every prayer.<sup>1</sup>

Then prayer, according to this young soldier, which certainly is in accord with the teaching and practice of Jesus, includes our enemies. This is a noble phrase, "and the German soldiers too." The problem of prayer for one's enemies always has been a difficult one. We have been told that it is apparently more difficult for those who have remained at home than it is for the soldiers themselves, face to face with those enemies. In the letter from young Abbey at the Front there is no doubt or hesitation. This American boy wants his mother to pray for the German soldiers—who also have mothers and a God.

Turning now to the letters of French soldiers, we find many references to the ideal and habit of prayer in the correspondence of Captain André Cornet-Auquier. The following paragraphs show how this gallant young officer regarded the matter:

At the front it is very difficult to pray well, you have so little time to yourself, and you are interrupted at every instant. It has happened to me, dead with sleep, to drop off into a slumber while praying, and when I wake up later in the night, I go right on praying in order to put me to sleep again. But God understands that, doesn't He? And anyway, prayer seems to me to be a constant state.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Harold Chapin's letters concerning the religious training of his child, quoted in Winifred Kirkland, *The New Death*, p. 89. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *A Soldier Unafraid*, pp. 19, 20. Copyright by Little, Brown & Co., publishers.

I feel that I am surrounded with prayers, and I often pray for you all. One of my best comrades here is a priest who is also a second lieutenant, like myself.<sup>1</sup>

A captain who is a friend of mine and who is a very pious Catholic said to me the other day that before every battle he prays. Our major answered that it was not the moment for such things and that he would do better to attend to his military duties. The captain replied: "Major, that doesn't prevent me from commanding, taking orders, and fighting." I said: "Captain, I do just as you do, and I find that it does me good."<sup>2</sup>

In the last letter of Jean Rival, one of the splendid youthful heroes of France, is this paragraph:

This morning, when only a few yards from the trenches, I heard mass and with faith received communion. Should I die, I will die as a Christian and as a Frenchman. I believe in God, in France, in victory. I believe in beauty, in youth, in life. May God protect me to the end. Yet, should the shedding of my blood aid towards victory, my God, let Thy will be done.<sup>3</sup>

The place and power of prayer in the lives of the home folk is shown by this extract from a letter written to his wife by Captain François de Torquat:

You must realize what a responsibility my company is; pray fervently and often so that your poor husband may be equal to his task and to the part which he is called upon to play; cold chills run down my back when I think of the many lives that will depend upon me. Their eyes will be fixed upon me; therefore pray earnestly that I may be at the height of the situation and that I may set an example; finally you must pray that if it is the will of God, we may see each other and love each other for a long time to come.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *A Soldier Unafraid*, p. 6. Copyright by Little, Brown & Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup> Maurice Barrès, *The Faith of France*, p. 241. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 263.

Among the letters of soldiers which have been published, none surpasses those of Alfred Casalis, which are contained in the volume, *For France and the Faith*, in their illustration of the meaning of prayer. The letters move in an atmosphere of communion with God, although they are full of the healthy, happy activities of the soldier's life. He writes:

How one feels the need of meditation after some time of barrack life! Here one lets go of himself to such an extent and becomes accustomed to living outside of any real communion with the Master, to praying with words and formulas only. Oh, that those who can, who have the leisure and strength might pray for those who can not.<sup>1</sup>

In one of his letters Casalis discusses the subject of prayer at some length. Two paragraphs of this letter are as follows:

Finally there remains prayer. We have already spoken of it, but the subject is inexhaustible. I do not refer to prayer of intercession for others, that they may know how to shape their lives to the Father's will of infinite love and that their vision of the duty to accomplish may be ever clearer and more vivid.

There is also prayer for ourselves. We must pray to be pardoned. Pardon is at first the destruction of habits and associations of ideas which grow in us so as to paralyze us. Briefly, we must ask God to renew our liberty without ceasing.<sup>2</sup>

He asks this significant question in another letter, involving a question which is searching and always relevant to a clear understanding of prayer:

Do you not believe that if our Monday morning prayer meetings were sometimes so cold, it was because we made prayers instead of praying?<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *For France and the Faith*, p. 16. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> P. 80.

<sup>3</sup> P. 89.

The habit of prayer persisted to the very end of Casalis' life. On May 9, 1915, he fell in a charge. His superior officer, Major Charles Schmuckel, wrote:

As a friend, as a relative, as a leader, I mourn for all my dear soldier boys but especially for yours, who had prayed with me on the eve of battle.<sup>1</sup>

On May 15 following the Major himself was killed. A comrade of young Casalis wrote, announcing this fact to the young man's father, and also adding details concerning the burial of his friend. Among other items, this appears:

Today I went to recite a prayer over the grave of this dear fallen friend. He is buried near the village of Roclincourt within the township of that name. His memory will remain engraved in my heart as that of a comrade and sincere affectionate friend. I am a Catholic, he was a Protestant and this difference of religious opinion in no way interfered with the bonds of friendship which were drawing us closer together every day.<sup>2</sup>

The chaplain sent this message to Casalis' parents:

The eve of the day when he had to advance to the attack, instructed of the dangers he was going to run, your son had prayed with his major and some others of his battalion. He asked God to guard them amidst the shot and shell and in the heat of action.

His prayer was heard otherwise than we could have desired; but may the faith which sustained him up to the end help you to endure without a murmur the will of our Heavenly Friend.<sup>3</sup>

At this point we may consider appropriately a book which is a most unusual product of the war, *A Soldier's Confidences with God; Spiritual Colloquies of Giosuè Borsi*, which has recently been published in an English

<sup>1</sup> *For France and the Faith*, p. 96. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

<sup>2</sup> P. 99.

<sup>3</sup> P. 100.



translation by P. J. Kenedy & Sons in New York. It bears the imprimatur of the late Cardinal Farley. The author of these quite remarkable conversations was a young Italian soldier who lost his life while leading his men in a desperate charge. "They found in his pocket a volume of his adored Dante, wet with his heart's blood, and a written farewell to his mother that was published in the leading newspapers of the world and at once took its place among the classics of letter writing." Borsi has revealed the most intimate emotions of his soul in these pages, and it is no wonder that enthusiastic Italian religious leaders have called them the "finest religious literature that has appeared since the confessions of St. Augustine." This is extravagant praise. But the book is a revelation of the glowing Italian soul, especially when it is read by a cool Anglo-Saxon Protestant like the present writer. The character of the author is especially significant. To quote from the Appreciation furnished by Arthur Benington, these colloquies were "written by no anchorite, no cloistered mystic, but by a young man of the world, poet, scholar, amateur actor, dramatic critic, commentator of Dante, darling of the salons of the gay world of Rome and Florence."

The following is from the diary of May 7, 1915, and is entitled, "He Discourses on the Joy of Conversing with God":

Sometimes I have thought that one cannot stand before Thee, my Lord, unless he be contrite, grave, trembling, timorous, with downcast eyes, but I perceive this is true only in a certain sense and at certain times, especially when we have incurred Thy wrath, fallen into grievous faults, opposed Thy will, deprived ourselves of Thy blessed peace. But more often I feel, my sweet Friend and Lord, that we must stand before Thee joyously, glad

and confident, head erect, fixing sparkling eyes upon Thee, alert and prompt to guess at once Thy least command, to obey with alacrity and bounding heart. Yes, while the bridegroom is near the guests make merry. So long as they hold their Father's hand, little children need not be afraid. We must love Thee, fear Thee, and serve Thee; but our fear must not be sad, our obedience must be that of the son and not of the slave. But above all we must have confidence, confidence and always confidence, and ever remember, with happy enthusiasm and unlimited devotion, that we are in the presence of supreme Intelligence and supreme Love. This is the state of mind in which I try to put myself, when I gird myself to write, because I feel, O Lord, that it is the most favorable, the one that helps me most in talking to Thee and listening to Thee.

Surely this is a manly and appealing method by which to practice the presence of God. The book is a most unexpected product of the trenches; but if the War can bring literature of this kind to the light it certainly has shown that it has a creative influence upon a certain type of mind. These papers prove again that the most mystical form of religion may go along with the most intensely human and manly type of Christian. With Borsi prayer was certainly a constant attitude of the soul.

The whole matter of prayer has been beset by many difficulties, the majority of which do not really exist, and associated with it have been many sentimental and pietistic expressions, which have done harm rather than good. The surest and best way in which to sweep all these out of existence is simply to go ahead and practice prayer. This has been put clearly in a brief paragraph by a recent writer:

I am not going to tell you how to pray, dear Molly, but just—to pray.

Prayer, as some one has said, is the consciousness of the presence of God.<sup>1</sup>

In seeking to define the matter anew, a preacher today cannot do better than to turn again to the familiar little volume by Harry Emerson Fosdick, entitled *The Meaning of Prayer*. Within equal compass of printed pages there is no book that sets out the whole subject so clearly, with such wide range of consideration and such perfect command of the delicate problems involved in the idea. It is, of course, designed for day-by-day study at home and discussion in classes, and therefore the arrangement of the material is poorly disposed for deliberate reading. This has not impaired its usefulness, however, for the minister who is seeking to clarify his ideas concerning the meaning of prayer in his own life and in the work of the church.

The inevitable conclusion from the study of these soldiers' letters and a re-reading of Dr. Fosdick's book is that prayer is an essential part of the Christian life and that it should be carried on more faithfully by every follower of Christ in a world re-made by war. We simply cannot do without it. It is, truly, "the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air." We are sure to make it more general and more powerful in the years immediately before us. Men in the midst of shell fire have been praying. Out of their prayer has come strength and peace and joy. The preacher must not only tell the people this, but he must practice it in his own daily life.

<sup>1</sup> Richardson Wright, *Letters to the Mother of a Soldier*, p. 21. Copyright by Frederick A. Stokes Co., publishers.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON PRAYER

SUGGESTION I

Ps. 80.

THE NATION ON ITS KNEES

An expository sermon would be appropriate in these times, using this great prayer for national forgiveness and restoration as material. If the entire psalm is not used, the sermon might have for a text verse 3 or verse 19,

“Turn us again, O God;  
And cause thy face to shine, and we shall be saved.”

- I. Conversion.
- II. Revelation.
- III. Salvation.

SUGGESTION 2

“For this let every one that is godly pray unto thee in the time of finding out sin:

Surely when the great waters overflow they shall not reach unto him” (Ps. 32:6).

THE ROCK ABOVE HIGH TIDE

Note the margin. In these great periods of national chastisement and renewal we are bidden to pray. The result is that we find a rock so safe and high that the swollen waters cannot reach us.

- I. The forces that drive us to prayer.
- II. The rescue that is wrought by prayer.

SUGGESTION 3

“And hearken thou to the supplication of thy servant, and of thy people Israel, when they shall pray toward this place: yea, hear thou in heaven thy dwelling-place; and when thou hearest, forgive” (I Kings 8:30).

### THE CHILD'S WHISPER

Describe for the background Solomon's prayer at the dedication of the great temple, of which the text is a part.

- I. The need of helps and means for prayer.
- II. The listening Father.
- III. The new life that flows from answered prayer.

### SUGGESTION 4

"God, be thou merciful to me a sinner" (Luke 18:13).

### A TRUE PRAYER

Put the two into vivid contrast. Then bring out the essential characteristics of the publican's petition.

- I. Specific. He called himself *the* sinner (margin); he asked directly for mercy.
- II. Penitent. He made no boast.
- III. Vital. He did not need a new house or a larger bank account; he needed pardon; he asked for what was essential to his highest life.
- IV. Trustful. He made his prayer, and went down to his house trusting God for the result.

### SUGGESTION 5

"I exhort, therefore, first of all, that supplications, prayers, intercessions, thanksgivings, be made for all men; for kings and all that are in high place; that we may lead a tranquil and quiet life in all godliness and gravity" (I Tim. 2:1, 2).

### A CALL TO PRAYER

Prayer is the supreme need in our time as it was in the age of the apostles.

- I. The variety of prayer. Four forms indicated in the text. We may use: silent, ejaculatory, private, public, written, spontaneous.
- II. Objects of prayer. All men. As many as there are persons. Especially for those in places of influence. Reason for this.

- III. Results of prayer. A peaceful, happy, useful, upright life. Prayer brings results in character. Prayer works; it is an "engine of achievement."

#### SUGGESTION 6

"These all with one accord continued steadfastly in prayer" (Acts 1:14).

#### OUR SOURCE OF POWER

Jesus had gone. The task of re-making the world in which they lived was rolled on the shoulders of a few men and women. What was the source of their power for this task?

- I. Inclusive prayer. All prayed. Men and women; young and old; strong and weak.
- II. United prayer. It was with one accord. Apparently no divided purposes or selfish criticisms or individual aims. Countless individual aims and needs fused in a common petition.
- III. Steadfast prayer. It was urgent, patient, persistent. Like Gordon, who said, "I prayed my boats up the Nile."
- IV. Victorious prayer. According to the records, results came. They were even greater than the petition specified.

#### SUGGESTION 7

"My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass away from me: nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou wilt" (Matt. 26:39).

#### THE GLORY OF GETHSEMANE

This prayer of Jesus is the perfect revelation of the spirit of true prayer. It consists of two factors:

- I. A great yearning. Jesus was a young man. His work did not seem to be done. He loved life. It was right for him to yearn for release from pain and death.
- II. A great renunciation. But he laid his life trustfully in the hands of God. He was ready to do anything that God willed him to do. This is the glory of Gethsemane.



## CHAPTER XIII

### INTERNATIONAL CONVICTIONS AND CONSCIENCE

As we conclude this study of the changes that the Great War had brought about in our thinking and in the consequent demands on the modern pulpit, we would emphasize the reality of the international consciousness and ideal that must hold sway over the civilized world in a new way.

To the Christian this is only a clearer expression of the ideal of the Kingdom of God; but there are thousands of those influenced today by the international mind who do not in any way associate it either with a religious or a Christian view of the world. They have discovered the fact that all men are so related to one another everywhere that nothing less than a cosmopolitan view of life will do justice to its fundamental meaning and value.

Now whether this feeling has a religious background or not, it is the temper to which the modern Christian preacher is most happy to speak. It affords him a sympathetic response to his message concerning the Kingdom and he can appeal for the ideals of Jesus with a new confidence knowing that they match that which is profoundest in the thought and yearning of the time.

Preachers discern this change in the depth and range of popular thinking. Rev. G. Campbell Morgan says:

In every way the outlook of man is more extensive than it was. The universe is bigger than it was two generations ago.

That is to say, men know its bigness better than they did. Where men thought parochially they are now thinking nationally. Where they thought of a nation they are thinking of a commonwealth. Where they thought of a world they are thinking of a universe.<sup>1</sup>

It is assuring at this time to find that the Protestant Christian churches of America have spoken with clearness and force. Among the reports presented at the Congress on the Purpose and Methods of Inter-Church Federations held in Pittsburgh in October, 1917, was that of a Subcommittee on International Justice and Good-Will. This has been published in the volume, *A Manual of Inter-Church Work*, and reprinted as a pamphlet, *International Friendship in the Church*. The former can be purchased from the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America. The latter may be obtained by addressing the World Alliance for International Friendship, 105 East 22d Street, New York City.

Naturally the question arises in the mind of the preacher, How can I perform any part in so ambitious a task as "the establishment of a Christian world-order"? It all seems so far beyond the influence of the country parish or the village where the preacher does his work! But no word spoken and no influence exerted is valueless or void of power in the creation of the ideals which move the minds and hearts of men. Therefore, however small the immediate result may be, every preacher must be utterly faithful to his opportunity to think and to speak on every occasion in the terms of international thought and good-will.

The report just cited will furnish material for the addresses and sermons by which the modern preacher

<sup>1</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 138. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

will seek to discharge his function as the creator of goodwill in the community and the definer of international ideals. The World Alliance for International Friendship stands ready to help with literature and suggestions. Any preacher may feel free to write for advice. In fact, a great agency is coming into existence for the purpose of promoting this mighty movement and no preacher need go unadvised in his efforts to meet this need.

One of the most stimulating books for the preacher who is thinking his way through this most vast and bewildering area of life is *The Hope of the Great Community* by the late Professor Josiah Royce. It puts in compact form many of the conclusions that are found in fuller form in his larger books. It throws out challenging suggestions; it stimulates preaching. The point on which Professor Royce is crystal clear is that the international ideal and conscience will not in any way transgress the rights of the individual nation. The following quotation is sufficient to state this clearly:

The community of mankind will be international in the sense that it will ignore no rational and genuinely self-conscious nation. It will find the way to respect the liberty of the individual nations without destroying their genuine spiritual freedom. Its liberty and union, when attained, will be now and forever, one and inseparable.<sup>1</sup>

Turning now to the practical experience of the soldiers and sailors themselves, we note the inevitable broadening of mind that has come through their contacts in the Great War. The allied armies have been formed by such a gathering and mingling of races as probably never

<sup>1</sup> *The Hope of the Great Community*, p. 52. Copyright by the Macmillan Co., publishers.

has been seen before. It has been a repetition of the external conditions of Pentecost. Whether it shall register the enduement of humanity with a new passion and power is yet to be seen. Manifestly millions of soldiers cannot have mingled in these new relationships without an immense broadening of horizon. Boys from Missouri farms and mountain villages have crossed the ocean, seen France, fought shoulder to shoulder with their own comrades, and been brigaded with the soldiers of England and France. There can be only one result from such an experience. These lads have had their horizons so broadened that they never will allow their surroundings to be what they were before the Great War.

But this change in physical environment is only a part of the forces that must effect a transformation in their thought and character. They have been in contact with the profoundest experiences of life. As Winifred Kirkland says:

Men, however young, however crude, who have for months passed every moment under the eyes of death, will not come back to us ignorant as they went. They cannot fail to have gained new social wisdom, and a bravery to embody it in practice to which the old hesitancies in civic improvement and initiative will seem an amusing cowardice.<sup>1</sup>

What form the enlarged demand of these soldiers is to take we may not be able to decide yet. Perhaps the hope that it will be the enlightened insistence upon a purer democracy in America may be too sanguine. But there certainly is some warrant for believing that these young citizens who have been in France will express

<sup>1</sup> *The New Death*, p. 125. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

their wider vision in some such demand as this. The author of *The New Death* believes that this expectation is justified and that an international conviction and conscience has been born in France.

After the war each man who has fulfilled his duty to his country will have before him a new duty to the world-state. "This new state will not be established without blows, despoilings, disputes, for an indefinite period, but without doubt, a door is even now opening upon a new horizon." . . . Duty to others is progressive—obligation to family, community, nation, world. Advance is retarded if any one of these duties is put out of sequence or exaggerated. At present the soldier has a clearer conception of internationalism than has the civilian, who fails to see its inevitable place in the solidarity of a man's obligations.<sup>1</sup>

Among the letters from French soldiers those of Albert Thierry are prominent. He was a Socialist and was killed in action in May, 1915. Here is his conception of the international ideal:

If the people turn from strife, if the middle class renounce their pretensions, then national peace will be forever established. If innocent of self-seeking, then man is much more closely bound to the family of his father and of his mother; one might affirm that he remains ever loyal to it, and that its tradition nourishes his mind and his heart so long as he has his being. Refusing to be self-seeking, even as regards his work, man will advance much further in this very field of labor, he will regard his trade as a means of establishing justice. Refusing to be self-seeking, the man who works for the people, from whom he has gone forth through education and to whom he returns in a spirit of sacrifice, learns to give them preference on account of their virtues while dedicating himself to the mission of reforming their vices. In this way there will be a broadening from the trade to the class, the class to the nation; the nation to its various national confederations, and to the confederation of the world at large; individual

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 144.



ambitions and national ambitions will be silenced, their conflict will end, and labor on earth will for the first time in history be produced in harmony and in peace.<sup>1</sup>

This sketch of the expanding consciousness of the individual from the narrowest area of household relations into the broadest community of international obligation is in accord with clearest Christian thought, as is also his idea of unselfishness as the method by which the growing adjustment is to be made. Thus the Socialist and the Christian come close together.

The whole international ideal, indeed, may be regarded as only the fellowship of the trenches written large. As a group of men fighting in France declared:

We live under shell fire in a social republic; if such a fraternity were prolonged there would no longer be any need to struggle one against another.<sup>2</sup>

Another soldier wrote:

I think less of myself than I did, less of the heights of personal success that I aspired to climb, and more of the service that each of us must render in payment for the right to live and by virtue of which only can we progress.<sup>3</sup>

These letters are consistent with the actions of the soldiers in their fraternal relations with one another and especially of the chaplains. M. Barrès relates the following incident:

In the village of Taintrux, near Saint-Dié, in the Vosges, on August 29, 1914 (on a Saturday, the holy day of the Jews), the ambulance belonging to the 14th Corps took fire from the German shells. The stretcher-bearers, in the midst of flames and

<sup>1</sup> Quoted in Barrès, *The Faith of France*, p. 127. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 203.

<sup>3</sup> *The Good Soldier*, p. 85.



explosives, carried out the one hundred and fifty wounded men who were there. One of these, who was about to die, asked for a crucifix. He begged Mr. Abraham Block, the Jewish chaplain, whom he mistook for the Catholic chaplain, to give it to him. Mr. Block lost no time; he looked for it, found it, and carried to this dying man the symbol of the Christian faith. Only a few feet beyond he himself was struck down by an *obus*. He passed away in the arms of the Catholic chaplain, Father Jamin, a Jesuit, whose recital has made this scene public.<sup>1</sup>

In reply to this Saint-Saëns said to Barrès:

Most assuredly, this union of a priest, a pastor, and a rabbi is extremely touching; but must one admire it? Viewed from a serious religious standpoint, it is not commendable. A faith which is tolerant is no longer a religion but religiousness. It is through such tolerance, so greatly the fashion, that religions perish, for they die of themselves, they are not killed by anyone; when persecuted they become strengthened.<sup>2</sup>

What shall we say to this? If such a position is tenable, what hope is there for an international ideal to be realized either through the Christian missionary enterprise or by any international program? The only answer we can make is that, granted all the reservations which may be warranted by loyalty to doctrines or institutions, there is still room for such practical fellowship as the Great War has made possible; and these generous relations do not in the least involve the surrender of positions which are quite distinct if not even positively antagonistic in private judgment. A more tolerant but no less vital and virile faith has been wrought out of the Great War.

<sup>1</sup> *The Faith of France*, p. 88. Copyright by Houghton Mifflin Co., publishers.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 290.

One of the most significant relationships that is growing clearer out of the Great War is that of the missionary enterprise to the ideal of the Kingdom of God and of international good-will. We are now aware that the missionary is the true altruist and statesman and that the enterprise of Christian missions is the nearest approach to an international program that has thus far been evolved by man.

We have thought of Christian missions in terms that were too narrow and did scant justice to the ideals that lie behind them. It has taken centuries of thought and action to bring out the scope of the Kingdom of God as Jesus conceived it and as his followers have groped into successively larger appreciations of it. The promoters of the missionary movement have been charged with going to serve the black needs that were far away and neglecting the white needs at their own doors. But this was most unjust. As a matter of fact it has been the people who were most alert to the needs of their own neighborhoods who have also been most concerned with the needs of those who were far off. The reason for this is that they had caught the vision of the Kingdom of God and have sought to realize in a program the good-will of Jesus. They have believed that the "City of God cannot be less than world-wide, and must gather into it the desirable things of all nations, must recognize among its citizens no distinctions, except of varying kinds of honour and use, between colour and race and sex and kind."<sup>1</sup>

In no narrow sense of the word but in the truest conception of the idea, modern preaching may be, as

<sup>1</sup> Bishop Talbot in *Christ and the World at War*, p. 36. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

it never has been before, missionary preaching. As we have noted, this involves a deepening of the sense in the word "missions"; but it brings us with hope and courage to the definition of the international ideal in the terms of Christian achievement.

The preacher, therefore, finds himself immediately and thoroughly at home in this roomy area of international good-will. He has been used to breathing its tonic atmosphere in all his effort to teach and practice Christian missions. One of the most stimulating sources of inspiration, although it is not so recent as the letters from which we have just quoted, is the work of Dr. John Henry Barrows and Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall in their endeavor to interpret Christianity to the mind of India.<sup>1</sup> The reading or re-reading of these books is commended just now to preachers in America who would understand how closely the international ideal and the enterprise of Christian missions correspond. As Dr. Barrows says:

Breaking away from the so-called Kingdom of Heaven, represented by the Jewish state, He [Jesus] launched a new and better commonwealth, giving it laws in the Sermon on the Mount, describing its spiritual, and hence pervasive, character in a score of parables, placing its sovereignty in the soul, and lifting it out of the ancient provincialism which was yet great enough to dream of a universal commonwealth of God.<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Sidney L. Gulick is another teacher of the unity between the international ideal and Christian missions. He speaks of "establishing a new world-order, the order

<sup>1</sup> See *Christianity the World Religion*, by John Henry Barrows; *Universal Elements of the Christian Religion* and *Christ and the Eastern Soul*, by Charles Cuthbert Hall.

<sup>2</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 51.

of Golden Rule Constructive Internationalism." Again, he says, "World Militarism or Golden Rule Internationalism—these are the alternatives."<sup>1</sup> But the Great War has given the final answer to the program of world-militarism. Therefore, according to Dr. Gulick, we are finally faced with the task of achieving an internationalism that squares with the Golden Rule. But that is the program of Christian missions.

Dr. Fosdick is ready to assert the identity of the two ideals. He says: "The missionary enterprise is the Christian campaign for international good-will."<sup>2</sup>

Mr. J. Lovell Murray agrees with Dr. Gulick. He says:

The two broad principles that are contending today for supremacy in international relations are self-advantage and service. The ultimate expression of the one is militarism; of the other, foreign missions.<sup>3</sup>

Again he writes:

There has also been growing in Christians during recent years a sense of social obligation, a desire to have a share in the Christianizing of all human relationships within our communities. Internationalize that idea of social Christianity and you have the modern missionary aim in one of its most important aspects.<sup>4</sup>

It is unnecessary to multiply authorities for this conclusion, that the consummate expression of the international ideal which has been defined as a result of the Great War ought to find realization in an enlarged

<sup>1</sup> *America and the Orient*, pp. ix, 4.

<sup>2</sup> *The Challenge of the Present Crisis*, p. 94. Copyright by the Association Press, publishers.

<sup>3</sup> *The Call of a World Task*, p. 58. Copyright by the Student Volunteer Movement for Foreign Missions, publishers.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

and glorified program of Christian missions. As Professor D. S. Cairns says:

The only Christianity that can prevail in the coming age is one that, learning from the present tragedy, declares that Christ shall have dominion over our whole international life.<sup>1</sup>

The final and most glorious result of the Great War, then, is a new conception of internationalism in the terms of Christian missions. To this ideal we believe our young men and women are to rally. The great missionary extension of Christianity is ahead of us. The noblest achievements of Christian service are in immediate prospect. The supreme opportunity of the Christian preacher is just beginning in a world re-made by War.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS ON THE INTERNATIONAL IDEAL

### SUGGESTION I

"Am I my brother's keeper?" (Gen. 4:9).

#### "THE HERESY OF CAIN"

This text reveals the dawn of social responsibility in the human mind. The title used is trite; but there is hardly a better one. We cannot avoid responsibility for one another. This fact plunged the world into war. A similar sense will unite the world to heal the wounds of war.

- I. The wrong that has been done.
- II. The responsibility that cannot be avoided.
- III. The punishment that must be met.

### SUGGESTION 2

"In that day there shall be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria; and the Egyptians shall worship with the Assyrians.

<sup>1</sup> *Christ and the World at War*, p. 45. Copyright by the Pilgrim Press, publishers.

In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, a blessing in the midst of the earth; for that Jehovah of hosts hath blessed them, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance" (Isa. 19:23, 25).

### THREE NATIONS ONE IN GOD

A strange statement for those who had been proud of their position as the "peculiar people" of Jehovah. Note:

- I. The cementing power of commerce.
- II. The value of united worship.
- III. The blessings that flow from united purpose.
- IV. The loving benediction of the God who has a separate name for each object of love.

### SUGGESTION 3

"Have we not all one father? hath not one God created us? why do we deal treacherously every man against his brother, profaning the covenant of our fathers?" (Mal. 2:10).

### PRACTICAL BROTHERHOOD

- I. We all have one divine Father.
- II. We know that our fathers were in covenant relations with God.
- III. Therefore the charge of treachery is the greater:
  - a) Against God.
  - b) Against their friends.

### SUGGESTION 4

"Thou hast had regard for the gourd, for which thou hadst not labored, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night; and should not I have regard for Nineveh that great city, wherein are more than six-score thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand, and also much cattle?" (Jonah 4:10, 11).



GOURDS AND MEN

The serious loss to our Christian consciousness because the book of Jonah, with its wonderful message concerning the love of God for all mankind, has become a storm center of debate as to its literal accuracy. When the book is mentioned the first thought is, Did the whale swallow Jonah? rather than, How can we realize the ideal of God's loving care for humanity? The truth is missed through mischievous insistence on unnecessary debate. This text is the great *a fortiori* argument of the book.

- I. God works for humanity's welfare.
- II. God guides the process of humanity's growth.
- III. God is patient through this long process.
- IV. God regards humanity as precious.
- V. God loves and labors for all mankind.

SUGGESTION 5

"Ye yourselves know how it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to join himself or come unto one of another nation; and yet unto me hath God showed that I should not call any man common or unclean" (Acts 10:28).

A NEW WORLD

This is the great revelation to the mind of Peter, in which he saw a new world. The discussion falls naturally into two heads:

I. None but Jews.

What a reversal of conditions! The Jews once put all other men outside the circle of their fellowship. Then for centuries they suffered a similar experience. This is gradually changing. Peter's ideals would have made Christianity a Jewish sect.

II. No man common or unclean.

Now he discovered a new universe. Its boundaries were as wide as humanity. No man was to be despised; all men were to be loved and helped. Peter's vision made Christianity a universal religion,

## SUGGESTION 6

"And he made of one every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26).

## THE NATION ABOVE THE NATIONS

This is the confession of faith of Paul. There has been frequent use of the term *super* in reference to men and things. This text defines the Supernation.

- I. God is the Creator and Lord of the Supernation.
- II. The nations are to dwell together in the Supernation.
- III. The Supernation is to possess and bless the whole earth.

## SUGGESTION 7

"I am debtor both to Greeks and to Barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish" (Rom. 1:14).

## THE OBLIGATIONS OF PRIVILEGE

Note the way in which this text reverses ordinary judgment. Paul was an educated Pharisee. He would naturally have said, Greeks, Barbarians, foolish men, and wise men are under obligation to me. Christianity reverses this. It puts obligation upon the strong.

- I. The obligation to give material help.
- II. The obligation to share our ideas and ideals.
- III. The obligation to give moral aid.
- IV. The obligation to bring Christ to men and men to Christ.

## SUGGESTION 8

"All authority hath been given unto me in heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit; teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world" (Matt. 28:19, 20).

THE GREAT COMMISSION

These are the marching orders of the Christian church and the personal commandment to every Christian.

- I. The eternal authority.
- II. The message of life.
- III. The seal of the threefold name.
- IV. The mastery of the enlarging truth.
- V. The abiding Presence and Power.

SUGGESTION 9

"The Kingdom of the world is become the Kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ: and he shall reign for ever and ever" (Rev. 11:15).

THE GREAT CONSUMMATION

- I. The kingdoms of the world must become a league of nations, a world-kingdom devoted to human welfare.
- II. The Master of the world-kingdom is the Christ of God.
- III. This kingdom shall endure forever.
- IV. This kingdom comes gradually and we must give our lives to the process of realizing it.



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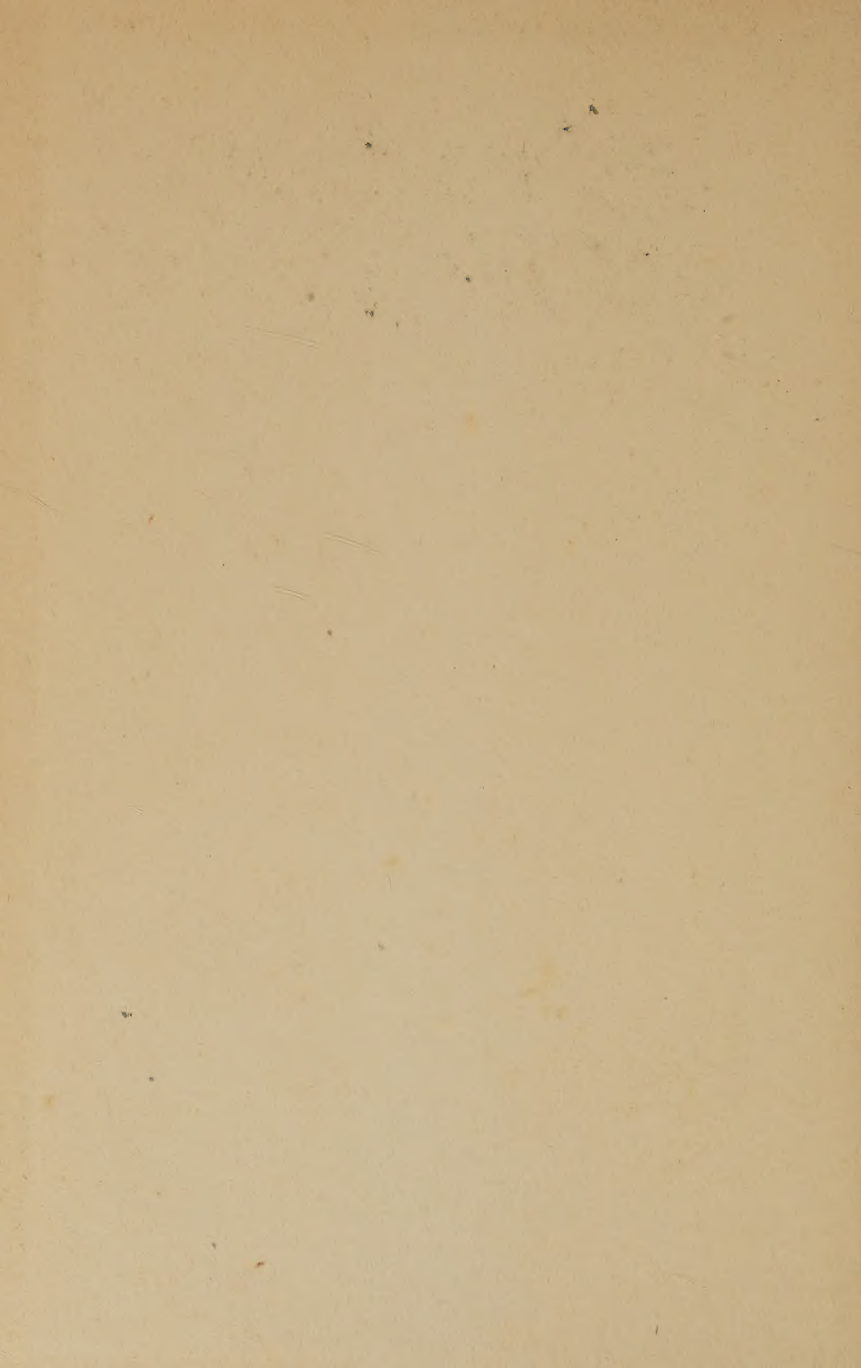
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